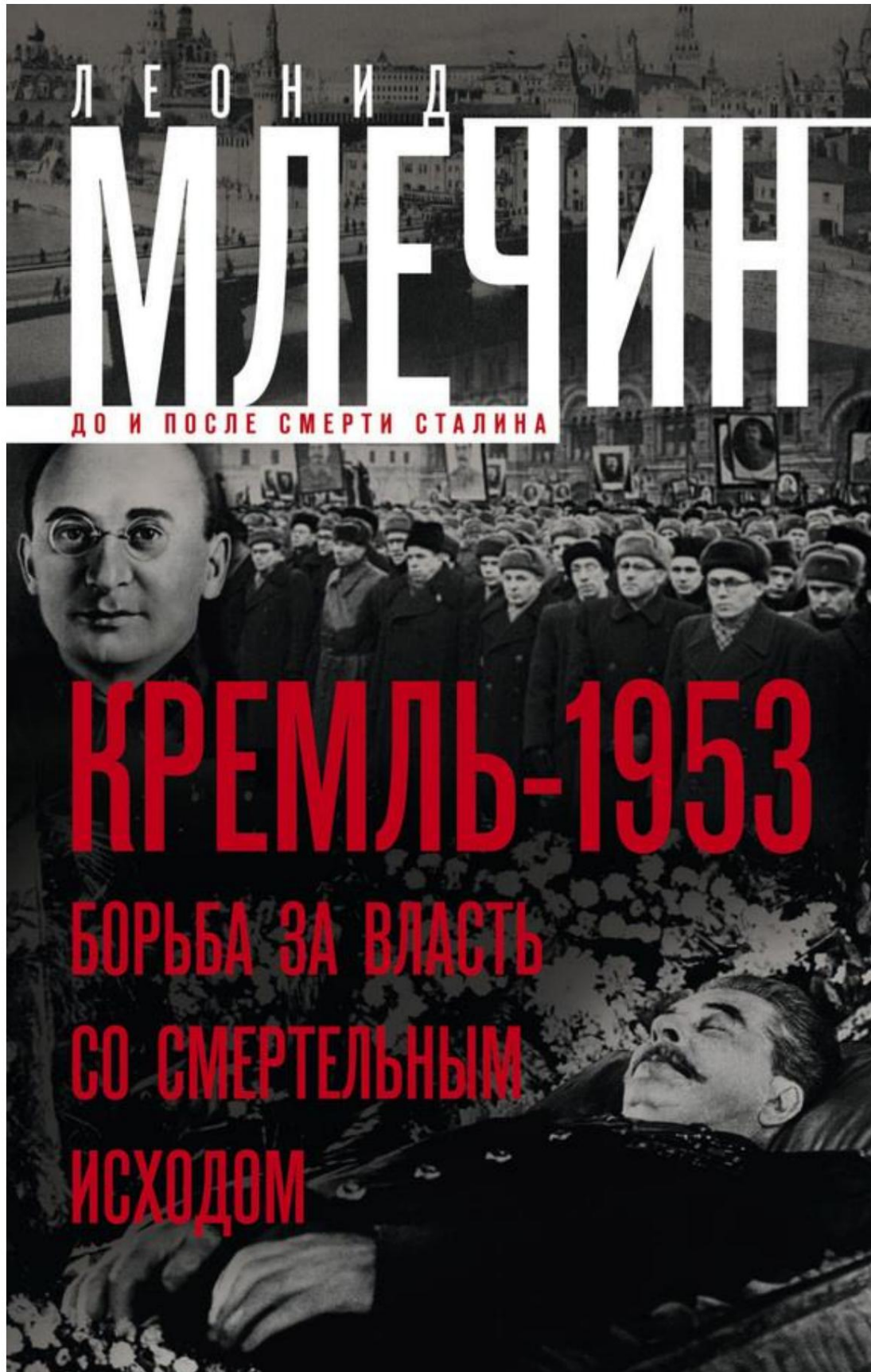


Leonid Mikhailovich Mlechin
Kremlin-1953. Fatal power struggle



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annotation

What happened in the Kremlin in the last Stalin years? What plans did the leader hatch until the very hour of his death? Why were there endless purges in the department on Lubyanka and some Chekists imprisoned others? For what reason did loyal Stalinist comrades-in-arms find themselves in disgrace and waiting for the worst? And why, immediately after the death of the leader, a fierce struggle for power unfolded in the Kremlin, which ended with the execution of one of the leaders of the country? This is perhaps the least studied chapter of Russian history.

In the new book, Leonid Mlechin, drawing pictures of the Kremlin life of the fifties, offers his version of events, unexpected and stunning. But, describing the events that determined the future of our country, the author relies on the results of modern historical research, on only recently declassified documents and the memoirs of the participants in those dramas and tragedies that have become known.

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From the author

The events that took place in the Soviet Union in the last Stalin years often seem inexplicable and strange.

The execution of the recent leaders of Leningrad, including one member of the Politburo, one member of the Organizing Bureau and one secretary of the Central Committee, the persecution of prominent party workers, immigrants from St. Petersburg, throughout the country.

The disgrace of the second person in the party, its main ideologist - a member of the Politburo and secretary of the Central Committee Andrei Aleksandrovich Zhdanov. And his quick and strange death, later called murder.

Public humiliation of Politburo member Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, whom the country and the world perceived as the closest ally and heir to Stalin, the arrest of his wife, a recent people's commissar and candidate member of the Central Committee, Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina.

The removal from real power of those who for many years were next to Stalin - Marshal Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, Lazar Moiseevich Kaganovich, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan.

The fall of the all-powerful Minister of State Security, Colonel-General Viktor Semenovich Abakumov, who was considered Stalin's favorite. During the Soviet years, five owners of the Lubyanka were successively arrested and shot. But tortured and tortured - and with special cruelty and sadism - only one Abakumov.

The purge of the Lubyanka apparatus and mass arrests of the leaders of the Chekist department, including the long-term head of Stalin's personal guard, who seemed trusted leader's face.

And finally, the only case made public at that time was the arrest of doctors known throughout the country, as well as the leaders of the Kremlin Medical and Sanitary Department, accused of deliberately killing the leaders of the party and government.

The chain of tragic events seems devoid of logic. Separate links as if not

interconnected. In fact, there was a plan born in the head of the leader.

But Stalin never made his plans public. Didn't warn anyone. No one consulted. And he did not trust his thoughts to paper.

"Stalin was different in that he did not always reveal himself," recalled his faithful ally in the Politburo, Lazar Kaganovich. He didn't tell us his plans. We should have guessed."

The leader could wait for years until the right moment came to deal with the one he planned to get rid of. "Inwardly ruthless and cruel, he rarely showed his feelings," historians note. - He was complex, cautious, closed to everyone, often contradictory and suspicious. He acted on the sly, preferably with the wrong hands.

So what was the intention?

It opens step by step.

The starting point is presented to Stalin by the Ministry of State Soviet security plan for an American military operation against the Soviet leader.

The plan was mind boggling. Shoot rockets at the Kremlin - right from the windows of the American embassy, which at that time was located in the very center of Moscow. In other words, to strike at the very heart of the country - to destroy the Soviet government and the leader himself, Stalin, who worked in the Kremlin in the evenings.

The operation, according to a memorandum that Minister of State Security Semyon Denisovich Ignatiev presented to Stalin, was entrusted to the American military attache in Moscow, John O'Daniel. The latest in military technology missiles (unassembled) - should be secretly delivered to Soviet territory through the Baltic at the end of 1951. The attack itself is scheduled for March 1952.

Then they refused the exact date. The Minister of State Security specified: the shelling of the Kremlin should coincide with the moment of the beginning of the war that the United States will unleash against the Soviet Union ...

The most mysterious intrigue of the Cold War. Yes, there are so many dark spots in it that it is more likely not a story, but the "Black Square" by Kazimir Malevich! Moreover, after the death of Stalin, the main characters were hastened to be sent to another world. And for some reason, they don't want to remember this story.

December 25, 1950 in China, where the communists led by Mao Zedong took power, Soviet Chekists arrested the Russian emigrant Ivan Ivanovich Varfolomeev.

But only more than a year later, Minister of State Security Ignatiev presented Stalin with a certificate on the case of "White emigre Varfolomeev arrested in China." Why did the investigation, which was conducted by none other than Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Dmitrievich Ryumin, take so long? The rising star of the Lubyanka, the man who killed the famous Abakumov, the former Minister of State Security. A historical figure, he will be discussed in the pages of this book.

Ryumin reported that Ivan Varfolomeev had served as a paid agent of Japanese intelligence since pre-war times. Then the Americans turned him over. Lieutenant Colonel Ryumin found out who it was: "Varfolomeev in China closely communicated with the American intelligence officer Rogalsky P.A."

To this day, it is not even known whether this person, Pyotr Arsenyevich Rogalsky, actually existed. Or Varfolomeev came up with it together with the magician investigator, who conducted his case in Lubyanka. Or rather, he composed.

According to the investigation, Piotr Rogalsky originally worked for French intelligence. Before the war he became an American agent. Moved to the United States. Married an American. Settled in New York, got a job in one of the banks. And his father-in-law worked for Lamothe Dupont, a big oligarch, as they would say today.

Dupont, and with him other pillars of American business - the heads of General Electric and the Standard Oil Company, Colonel Ryumin reported, became part of the secret "financial center". And this is the main thing in the memo of the Ministry of State Security:

the secret center was formed for one purpose - to raise money to prepare the United States for war against the Soviet Union.

The plan of attack itself, according to the materials of the Department of Homeland Security, is being developed by the top military leadership of the United States - the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General Omar Bradley, the commander of strategic aviation, General Curtis Lemay, the chief of staff of the air force, General Nathan Twining, and General Hoyt Vandenberg.

All names are known, these are the largest American military leaders. Hoyt Vandenberg was of particular interest because during the war the general was deputy head of the American military mission in Moscow, and then headed the Central Intelligence Group - the predecessor of the CIA.

And most importantly, what the investigation reported: the President of the United States, Harry S. Truman, had already blessed the plans developed by them. Chief among them is a missile attack on the Kremlin in order to destroy the Soviet government at once.

"Rogalsky," the Chekists reported to Stalin, "became aware that the American military attache in Moscow, General O'Daniel, sent the so-called "internal strike plan" to the US War Department, proposing to bombard the territory of the Kremlin with large bombs using new (silent) ejectors. destructive force, developing a high temperature during the explosion.

Rogalsky told Varfolomeev that "the Americans, using illegal channels allegedly available to them on the Baltic coast of the USSR, were supposed to transfer throwing apparatuses to Soviet territory."

In addition, Varfolomeev testified during interrogation, "in 1949, the American embassy in Moscow was instructed to take special account of all more or less prominent party and Soviet workers who, in the opinion of the Americans, had been "offended" by the Soviet government (removal from responsible posts, demotions, etc.), and find opportunities to attract them to work in favor of the United States.

In other words, the Americans are recruiting a fifth column, ready to help in case of war. external enemy.

"Plan of internal strike" - this idea acquired such a name at the Lubyanka. Stalin was warned that the American military attache had already sent to Washington a detailed plan of the Kremlin showing the location of the apartments of members of the Soviet government, the bomb shelter and the power plant.

How did the American know all this?

From your agency.

The 2nd Main Directorate (counterintelligence) of the Ministry of State Security, reassured the leader, is conducting operational and investigative work in order to find the one who told the American military attache all this.

According to Rogalsky, according to a note from the Ministry of State Security, the American attache and four of his assistants, who drew up the "internal strike plan", are ready to carry it out themselves. And the leaders of the "financial center", headed by Dupont, guaranteed full material security for themselves, if they remained alive, and for their families.

The Chekists, an emigrant brought from China, Ivan Varfolomeev, were ordered to prepare for a large public trial. His stunning, sensational testimony was supposed to prove the existence of a grandiose conspiracy against our country, in which internal enemies were united with external ones.

Part one Internal strike plan

Line one

The heir loses his inheritance and wife

A grandiose idea was born gradually.

After the war, in the autumn of 1945, Stalin left Moscow. He rested in the south for several months. The age and tension of the war years had an effect. "He wanted peace, - recalled his daughter Svetlana. And she added: "Sometimes he himself did not know what he wanted."

He took hydrogen sulfide baths at Malaya Matsesta. Stalin from a young age suffered from diseases of the musculoskeletal system. His arms and legs hurt. The left arm was badly bent and unbent. Then it was called dryness. He could not hold anything heavier than a pipe with his left hand. The cause may have been a childhood trauma, a fracture. Over the years, rheumatoid arthritis also developed. Joints hurt. Muscle atrophy has begun. The most difficult was the morning, when there was a feeling that everything hurts and crunches. Matsesta baths relieved pain, and Stalin took them regularly. Didn't swim in the sea. The leader did not undress in the presence of other people. Nobody saw him naked.

When the leader went to rest, foreign correspondents in Moscow wrote that Stalin was old, ill and would soon leave his post. He will be replaced by Politburo member, Deputy Prime Minister and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov. For many years he was the closest associate of the leader, was considered the second person in the country and his obvious heir. It's probably become too obvious...

"I had to carefully study the status of the close leader," recalled those years an employee of the Central Committee apparatus. - Who and how close was to the leader of his associates. And the approach to the leader was different.

Molotov - a disciple of Lenin and an ally of Stalin; Voroshilov is a faithful disciple of Lenin, the closest ally and friend of Stalin; Kaganovich is the closest ally; Mikoyan is one of the closest associates; Zhdanov is one of the closest students and associates; Khrushchev - faithful student and colleague; Shvernik is a comrade-in-arms.

On December 1, 1945, the British newspaper The Daily Herald published a correspondence from Moscow, which recounted rumors related to Stalin's vacation: "Today, the political leadership of the Soviet Union is in the hands of Molotov, with, of course, there are general directives from the Politburo" .

The leader was sent reviews of the foreign press. These assumptions pissed him off. And he was in a hurry to show that all the threads of control were in his hands. In November, he had already reprimanded the members of the Politburo for Pravda's reporting of Winston Churchill's very friendly speech in London towards the Soviet Union: "I consider it a mistake ... Soviet leaders do not need praise from foreign leaders." Molotov immediately replied: "The publication of Churchill's abridged speech was authorized by me. I consider this a mistake ... In any case, it could not be published without your consent.

Reuters reported that the censorship of correspondence from foreign journalists from Moscow has been eased. It referred to the words spoken on November 7, 1945, at a reception by Molotov to one of the American journalists:

"I know that you correspondents want to eliminate censorship. What would they say if I agreed to this on condition of reciprocity?

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich assured his comrades in the Politburo that he did not say such words. But it was too late. The leader was angry. December 5, 1945 telegraphed from Sochi to Molotov, Beria, Mikoyan and Malenkov:

"Three days ago I warned Molotov by telephone that the press department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs made a mistake by letting through the correspondence of the Daily Herald newspaper from Moscow, which sets out all sorts of fables and slanderous fabrications about our government, about the relationship between members of the government and about Stalin.

Molotov answered me that he believed that foreign correspondents should be treated more liberally and that correspondence could be passed without special strictness. I answered that it is harmful for our state. Molotov said that

he will immediately order the restoration of strict censorship.

Today, however, I read in the TASS telegrams the correspondence of the Moscow correspondent of the New York Times, which was passed through by the press department of the NKID, which sets out all sorts of slanderous things about members of our government ...

If Molotov ordered three days ago to impose strict censorship, and the NKID press department did not comply with this order, then the NKID press department must be held accountable. If Molotov forgot to order, then the press department of the NKID had nothing to do with it and Molotov must be held accountable. I'm asking you to take care of this."

Members of the Politburo obediently conducted an investigation. It was reported in Sochi that Molotov, after Stalin's outcry, had, of course, given appropriate instructions to the press department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, but the correspondence for the New York Times that had outraged the leader had already been sent.

Stalin was still dissatisfied. His slow-witted comrades-in-arms did not understand him. He ordered not to find out what happened and how - everything was already clear to him! - and about punishing Molotov! On the same day he dictated a new message to Malenkov, Beria and Mikoyan. This was already a real indictment against Molotov:

"I received your code. I find it completely unsatisfactory. It is the result of the naivety of the three, on the one hand, the sleight of hand of the fourth member, that is, Molotov, on the other hand ...

Molotov could not have been unaware that the libels against the Soviet government contained in these reports are harmful to the prestige and interests of our state. However, he did not take any measures to put an end to the outrage until I intervened in this matter. Why didn't he take action? Is it because Molotov considers such libels to appear in the order of things, especially after he made a promise to foreign correspondents about a liberal attitude towards their correspondence? None of us has the right to single-handedly decide on a change in the course of our policy. But Molotov arrogated to himself such a right. Why, on what basis? Is it because libels are included in the plan of his work? ..

Before your cipher, I thought that we could confine ourselves to reprimanding Molotov. Now this is no longer enough. I was convinced that he did not really value the interests of our state and the prestige of our government, if only to achieve popularity among certain foreign circles. I can no longer consider such a comrade as my first deputy ...

I ask you to summon Molotov, read this telegram of mine to him, but the copies do not transmit."

The troika invited Molotov, and now it was a different story. It became clear to everyone the degree of discontent of the leader, who demanded severe punishment. Troika reported in Sochi:

"We told Molotov that all the mistakes he had made in the last period, including the mistakes in matters of censorship, were on the same plane of concessions to the Anglo-Americans, and that in the eyes of foreigners there was an opinion that Molotov had his own policy, different from the policy of the government and Stalin and that with him, with Molotov, you can work together ... Molotov, after some thought, said that he made a lot of mistakes, but considers it unfair to distrust him, shed a tear.

Members of the Politburo tried to somehow help Molotov, and therefore reported to Stalin that Vyacheslav Mikhailovich repented, asked for forgiveness and cried.

Stalin squeamishly replied:

- Why is he, a college student, crying?

On December 9, the leader sent an extensive cipher to Moscow, in which he reprimanded his comrades-in-arms for weakness and liberalism in foreign policy and demanded unshakable firmness from them: "You succumbed to pressure and intimidation from the United States, began to hesitate, adopted a liberal course towards foreign correspondents and gave out their own government to desecrate these correspondents, hoping

propitiate the United States and England with this. Your calculation was, of course, naive. I was afraid that with this liberalism you would frustrate our policy of steadfastness and thus let our state down. It was at this time that the entire foreign press shouted that the Russians could not stand it, they had yielded and would make further concessions. But the case helped you, and you turned in time to the policy of steadfastness.

Members of the Stalinist Politburo could be accused of anything but liberalism. What did the angry words of the leader mean? First, the demand for maximum rigidity in relation to the West. Secondly, confirmation of the main administrative principle - no independence, no decision without the sanction of the leader! Thirdly, this is actually a sentence to Molotov, who made serious political mistakes: "I can no longer consider him my first deputy." It sounded ominous.

Molotov answered Stalin: "I recognize that I made serious political mistakes in my work ... Your encryption is imbued with deep distrust of me, as a Bolshevik and a person, which I accept as the most serious party warning for all my future work, wherever I work. I will try to earn your trust, in which every honest Bolshevik sees not just personal trust, but the trust of the party, which is dearer to me than my life.

Molotov, perhaps the only one in the Politburo, understood the scale of Stalin's plans and fully supported them. But the leader no longer needed him. Molotov was an incredibly cold person. Other people's suffering never touched him. But now he was under attack. And I fully felt what it means to fall into disfavor. An interesting detail: Molotov, such a tough politician, had a languid handshake of a weak character.

Experienced officials saw how Vyacheslav Mikhailovich was pushed aside from the main affairs. This went on year after year. On March 29, 1948, the Politburo decided: "In connection with the overload, to satisfy the request of Comrade Molotov to release him from participation in meetings of the Bureau of the Council of Ministers so that Comrade Molotov could deal mainly with foreign policy affairs."

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich did not at all ask to be removed from participation in key decision-making. It was Stalin who entered the words about "comrade Molotov's request." The decision of the Politburo meant that Molotov was removed from the leadership of the country. But the worst for him began when the Ministry of State Security, with the sanction of Stalin, took on his wife.

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich and Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina lived in love and harmony until her death. She was just as ardent a communist as Molotov, and she loved Stalin even more than her husband. Wife and daughter Svetlana were the only people whom Vyacheslav Mikhailovich treated with tenderness.

Polina Semyonovna was seven years younger than Molotov. She was born in Yekaterinoslav and from the age of fourteen worked as a stuffer at a cigarette factory. In May 1917 she fell ill with tuberculosis. She could not work, was treated and lived with her sister. After the revolution, she joined the Red Army. In 1918 she was admitted to the party, in 1919 she was hired as an instructor of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine on work among women.

In 1921, she moved to Moscow and became an instructor at the Rogozhsko-Simonovsky District Committee. In the same year, he and Molotov got married. After the wedding, Zhemchuzhina went to study. In 1925 she graduated from the working faculty named after M.N. Pokrovsky, in 1927 - Marxism courses at the Communist Academy. In the summer of 1927, Zhemchuzhina became the secretary of a party cell at the New Dawn perfume factory. For a year she worked as an instructor at the Zamoskvoretsky District Committee. In September 1930, she was appointed director of the New Dawn perfume factory.

In those years, the Stalins and Molotovs were family friends. In the last hours of Nadezhda's life Sergeevna Alliluyeva, Stalin's wife, next to her was Polina Zhemchuzhina.

This happened in 1932 on the November holidays.

On November 8, Stalin and Alliluyeva visited the Bolshoi Theater. Nadezhda Sergeevna like

it would seem that the husband pays too much attention to one of the ballerinas. Passion for ballerinas was considered fashionable in the Soviet leadership. From the theater they went to have dinner at the People's Commissar of Defense Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, who had a lot of guests, mostly military.

Stalin was in an excellent mood. Then they said that he seemed to be showing signs of attention to the wife of one of the military leaders. This did not go unnoticed by those around him, especially his wife. Seeing that she was unhappy, Stalin threw an orange peel into her plate and, in his rude manner, turned to her:

- Hey, you!

Nadezhda Alliluyeva flared up:

- I'm not "hey, you"!

She jumped up and left the room. She was followed by Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina. The two of them walked for a long time around the autumn Kremlin. Under Stalin, it was closed to visitors. There was no one there but the guards.

Zhemchuzhina will tell later that Nadezhda complained about her husband. She was jealous of Stalin and believed that she had reasons for this. Stalin's daughter Svetlana Polina Semyonovna said:

- Her father was rude, it was difficult for her - everyone knew that; but after all, they had already lived together for many years, there were children, a house, a family, everyone loved Nadia so much ... Who would have thought! Of course, it was not a perfect marriage, but is it even perfect?

Nadezhda Alliluyeva seemed to calm down and went home - the family of the general secretary lived in the Poteshny building of the Kremlin. Stalin and Alliluyeva slept in different rooms. She is at home. He is in the office or in a small room with a telephone near the dining room. There he lay down that night after the banquet. This means that in those fatal hours, hours of despair, longing that burned her jealousy, Nadezhda Alliluyeva was left completely alone. If Stalin, upon returning, wanted to explain himself or even see what was happening with his wife, she might have remained alive. But he returned from Voroshilov in a great mood and, presumably, did not want to spoil him with unpleasant explanations with his wife.

In the morning the housekeeper came to wake Nadezhda and found her dead. She shot herself with a lady's pistol, which her brother Pavel Alliluyev brought to her ... On November 10, 1932, Izvestia reported the death of "an active and devoted member of the party, a student of the artificial fiber department of the chemical faculty of the Industrial Academy, Nadezhda Sergeevna Alliluyeva."

Later it will become clear that the presence of Nadezhda had a beneficial effect on Stalin. During her lifetime, there were no heavy feasts in Stalin's house, which often ended in some kind of indecency. Drunk members of the Politburo threw ripe tomatoes at the ceiling and laughed like crazy. After the death of his wife, Stalin changed a lot. The gloomy features gradually took over. Stalin began to drink more, sat at the dinner table for three or four hours, until alcohol clouded his brain. For a long time he did not let his companions go - he was afraid to be alone.

In the early thirties, Stalin listened to the opinion of Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina. She inspired the leader that it was necessary to develop perfumery, because women needed not only soap, but also perfumes and cosmetics. Zhemchuzhina headed the trust of the soap and perfume industry, and in the summer of 1936 - the Main Directorate of the soap and perfume and cosmetic industry of the People's Commissariat of Food Industry. A year later, she is already deputy people's commissar of the food industry.

In January 1939, Stalin made her people's commissar of the fishing industry, ordered her to be elected a candidate member of the Central Committee and a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. He awarded the Orders of Lenin, the Red Banner of Labor, the Red Star, the Badge of Honor.

But Stalin's attitude towards Molotov had already changed. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, who headed the government, received an unexpected appointment to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Not everyone then understood that he was pushed aside and lost the role of the second person.

And his wife had much more serious troubles. A case was brought against her in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs on charges of having links with "enemies of the people and spies." Although Stalin himself should have been judged on this accusation first of all - it was he who appointed those whom he later declared enemies to high positions.

Arrests began in her case. In June 1939, they took the doctor Ilya Lvovich Belakhov, director of the Institute of Cosmetics and Hygiene, which was part of the Main Directorate of the Perfume Industry (that is, he was subordinate to Zhemchuzhina). The arrest warrant was signed by Vsevolod Nikolayevich Merkulov, First Deputy Commissar of State Security of the 3rd rank.

Testimony against Polina Zhemchuzhina was urgently needed, so Ilya Belakhov was interrogated with particular cruelty. This was led by Vsevolod Merkulov.

Time will pass, and Merkulov will say about himself: "I was a naive, very modest and very shy person. Somewhat closed and silent. I did not make speeches, and I never learned how to make them until now. My tongue seemed to be bound by something.

If Merkulov was once modest and shy, then in the Chekist service he successfully got rid of their shortcomings.

"From the very first day of my arrest, I was mercilessly beaten 3-4 times a day," Belakhov wrote in a statement to the prosecutor, which the head of the prison sent to Merkulov's secretariat. - They beat me with rubber sticks, steel springs and rulers, beat me on the genitals. I lost consciousness. They burned me with hot cigarettes, doused me with water, brought me to my senses and beat me again. Then they bandaged me in an outpatient clinic, threw me into a punishment cell and beat me again the next day. I urinated with blood, my spine was broken, I began to lose my sight.

They demanded that I confess that I cohabited with Citizen Zhemchuzhina and that I was a spy. I could not slander a woman, for this is a lie. I have never been a spy. I was told that I only wrote a small statement addressed to the People's Commissar, that I plead guilty to this, and they themselves will tell me the facts.

The arrested person was brought to the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. He generously promised:

- Belakhov, be frank, you will return to freedom and will work. True, the first time not in Moscow, but in a provincial university. Then you will move to Moscow.

Belakhov did not want to slander Polina Semyonovna. Beria ordered the arrested man to lie down on the floor, dropping his trousers, and nodded to Kobulov, who was sitting in the office. Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Bogdan Zakharovich Kobulov himself beat the arrested man with a rubber stick.

Beria and Molotov saw each other often, Lavrenty Pavlovich greeted the head of government in the most friendly way. They were on "you". His first deputy Merkulov bowed respectfully to Vyacheslav Mikhailovich. And at the same time, they both went out of their way to plant his beloved wife ...

Ilya Lvovich Belakhov was kept in a cell until the start of the war. He wrote a letter to Merkulov, unaware that he sent him to jail: "I am innocent, and I beg you to save me. I beg you to pay attention to the illegality and criminality of some of the persons who conducted the investigation. During the investigation, I was beaten, tortured, forcing me to sign non-existent facts. I cannot convey to you the full weight of the torment and suffering I endured.

In the autumn of 1941, he was shot without trial or investigation.

On October 18, 1941, People's Commissar Beria handed over secret order No. 2756/6 to the employee for special assignments of the NKVD special group, Senior Lieutenant of State Security Demyan Emmanuilovich Semenikhin:

"With the receipt of this, it is proposed that you leave for the city of Kuibyshev and bring to execution of the sentence - to capital punishment - to shoot the following prisoners ...

Report on performance.

In the list of the doomed at number 22 was Ilya Lvovich Belakhov. The certificate of the 1st Special Department of the NKVD says that he was shot on November 1, 1941. Senior lieutenant of state security Semenikhin fulfilled the instructions of the people's commissar. Two years later, he rose to lieutenant colonel of state security and received the Order of the Red Banner.

The shooting of Belakhov was illegal even at that time. First, he was not even formally sentenced to death. Secondly, the criminal law did not at all provide for such a measure of punishment as execution by shooting for crimes that he

imputed as a consequence.

In 1953, when Beria himself was arrested, the USSR Prosecutor General Roman Andreevich Rudenko reminded him of this story. Beria calmly explained, he was just following the instructions:

- The arrest of Belakhov was carried out in connection with Zhemchuzhina at the direction of the authorities.

The authority is Stalin. The name of the leader in the protocols of interrogations of Beria investigators tried not to mention.

In hindsight, at the end of February 1942, the head of the NKVD investigation department, Lev Emelyanovich Vlodzimirsky, drew up indictments in which he wrote that the executions had been carried out on "special instructions from the directive bodies." Deputy People's Commissar Kobulov approved them, putting the date everywhere - October 17, 1941. The whole pack, as expected, was also brought to the USSR Prosecutor Viktor Mikhailovich Bochkov.

Bochkov was not a lawyer, but a border guard officer. In 1938 he graduated from the Military Academy named after M.V. Frunze, but instead of being appointed to the headquarters of the Far Eastern Front, by the decision of the Central Committee, he ended up in the NKVD apparatus. Beria, after talking with the officer, appointed him to the head of the prison department, then the 4th (special) department of the NKVD. And in 1940, while listening to the radio, Viktor Bochkov learned that he had been approved by the USSR prosecutor. He was, as he himself admitted, shocked, but did not refuse the post.

When Lev Vlodzimirsky brought him the conclusions about the executions, Bochkov called Beria. He was interested in only one question: was there really an indication from the governing bodies? Lavrenty Pavlovich barked at the USSR prosecutor:

- Do you doubt it?

Viktor Bochkov signed on all matters: "I agree." And put the same fake date - October 17, 1941...

The testimony knocked out of the arrested was enough to file the case for Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina.

On August 10, 1939, the Politburo adopted a resolution that passed under the highest secrecy stamp - "special folder". It said that Molotov's wife, whose name was diligently not mentioned, "showed indiscretion and indiscriminateness in relation to her connections, which is why, surrounded by Comrade. The pearl turned out to be quite a few hostile spy elements, which involuntarily made their espionage work easier.

The Politburo instructed the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs "to carry out a thorough check of all materials relating to Comrade. Pearl." Skilled people in the NKVD immediately concocted testimony about her involvement in "sabotage and espionage work" and presented it to the Central Committee. But Stalin at that time was satisfied with little. He didn't hurry. Enough has been done: Molotov's wife has already been compromised by links with enemies.

On October 24, the Politburo decided:

"Consider the testimony of some of those arrested about the involvement of Comrade Zhemchuzhina in sabotage and espionage work, as well as their statements about the biased conduct of the investigation, as slanderous."

In other words, the arrested, who were interrogated by the NKVD, slandered their wife Molotov. But they did it of their own free will, and not because they were beaten ...

Polina Zhemchuzhina was removed from the post of people's commissar of the fishing industry and, with a big decrease, was transferred to the Republican People's Commissariat of Local Industry as the head of the head office of the textile industry. In February 1941, at the XVIII Conference of the CPSU (b)

Zhemchuzhina lost her high party title of candidate member of the Central Committee - "as she did not ensure the fulfillment of the duties of candidates for membership of the Central Committee." Georgy Dimitrov, General Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, described this episode in his diary: "The evening session is closed. A number of people were withdrawn from the members and candidates of the Central Committee and the Audit Commission. The case with Zhemchuzhina made a special impression. She performed well: "The party rewarded me, encouraged me for good work. But I got carried away, my deputy (as People's Commissar of the fishing industry) turned out to be a spy, my friend is a spy. She didn't show any vigilance. Learned from all of this. I declare that I will work honestly, in the Bolshevik way, until my last days.

Beria's apparatus collected materials on all the leaders of the country. The high position did not protect. No one knew who would fall into disfavor tomorrow. In 1953, the former Minister of State Security Merkulov said during interrogation:

- In 1938-1940, at the direction of Beria, the biographical data of some leaders of the party and government were verified. This work was carried out by an employee of the secret political department Finkelberg, who went to the field for this purpose.

Grigory Pavlovich Finkelberg was the deputy head of the 3rd department of the 2nd Department of the Main Directorate of State Security. He rose to the rank of colonel.

Materials on responsible employees in department "A" (accounting and registration) were kept separately in bags with the inscription "Personal archive of the People's Commissar of State Security Merkulov." Merkulov forbade them to give out to anyone. At the beginning of the war, the special archive was evacuated to Kuibyshev, then moved to Sverdlovsk. In 1944 they returned to Moscow. Bogdan Kobulov carefully reviewed all the cases here. Less than half returned for storage in department "A". The rest of the material was kept.

After the war, the leader again took up Molotov. Zhemchuzhina was deprived of her job and transferred to the reserve of the Ministry of Light Industry. Now Stalin also began to blame Polina Semyonovna for having a "bad influence" on Nadezhda Alliluyeva. Maybe indirectly responsible for her suicide...

A new case was opened against Molotov's wife. They brought new charges - in the spirit of the trends of those years. On December 27, 1948, Minister of State Security Viktor Semenovich Abakumov and Deputy Chairman of the Party Control Commission under the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Matvey Fedorovich Shkiryatov signed a note addressed to Stalin about Zhemchuzhina's "politically unworthy behavior": "For a long time, Jewish nationalists were grouped around her, and she, taking advantage of her position, treated them patronizingly, was, according to their statements, their adviser and intercessor.

On December 29, Abakumov and Shkiryatov presented the entire set of accusations at a meeting politburo. The decision was written:

"1. An audit of the Party Control Commission established that Zhemchuzhina P.S. for a long time maintained contact and close relations with Jewish nationalists who do not deserve political trust and are suspected of espionage; participated in the funeral of the leader of the Jewish nationalists Mikhoels and with her conversation about the circumstances of his death with the Jewish nationalist Zuskin (People's Artist of the RSFSR, Stalin Prize laureate Veniamin Lvovich Zuskin played in the State Jewish Theater, in 1952 he would be shot. - Auth.) gave rise to hostile *people* to spreading anti-Soviet provocative rumors about the death of Mikhoels; participated on March 14, 1945 in a religious ceremony in the Moscow synagogue.

2. Despite what P.S. In 1939, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks issued a warning about her illegibility in her relations with persons who did not deserve political trust, she violated this decision of the party and continued to behave politically unworthy in the future.

In connection with the foregoing, to exclude Zhemchuzhina P.S. of the members of the CPSU (b).

So, she was accused that, firstly, she told the truth about the murder of Mikhoels, and

secondly, she was present in the synagogue, where on that March day of the victorious year a mourning service was held in memory of those who died in World War II.

And all this was said in the presence of Molotov. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich did not dare to say a word in defense of his wife. He allowed himself to abstain only in the voting. This natural act will also be blamed on him. Some other party leaders in a similar situation begged to be allowed to destroy their relatives, declared enemies of the people, with their own hands!

Exclusion from the party was a harbinger of an imminent arrest.

Stalin threw to Molotov:

You need to separate from your wife.

Molotov passionately loved Polina Semyonovna all his life. He returned home and retold the conversation with Stalin to his wife. Polina Semyonovna said firmly:

- Since this is necessary for the party, then we will disperse.

She had no character. She packed her things and moved in with a relative - it was like a divorce from Molotov. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, trying to save himself, wrote a repentant letter to the leader: "During the voting in the Central Committee of the proposal to expel P.S. I abstained with Zhemchuzhina, which I recognize as politically erroneous. I declare that, having thought over this question, I vote for this decision of the Central Committee, which is in the interests of the party and the state and teaches a correct understanding of the communist party spirit. In addition, I admit the heavy guilt that I did not keep Zhemchuzhina, a person close to me, from false steps and connections with anti-Soviet Jewish nationalists like Mikhoels in time.

Molotov's letter is the limit of human humiliation to which the system brought a person. The simplest human feelings, like love for a wife and the desire to protect her, were viewed as a serious political crime.

January 26, 1949 Polina Zhemchuzhina was arrested. Minister Abakumov received from Stalin the sanction for her complete isolation. Meetings with relatives were forbidden so that she would not convey to Molotov "the contents of her case and what she was interrogated about."

Ten people were arrested - relatives (brother's sister, nephews) and former colleagues, from whom they beat out testimony against Zhemchuzhina. Sister (housewife) and brother (retired) died in prison.

The leader ordered that materials from her case be sent to members of the Central Committee. There were many vile details invented by the investigators with a clear desire to expose Molotov to ridicule. The MTB materials claimed that Zhemchuzhina was unfaithful to her husband, and even named the names of her imaginary lovers.

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Israel in 1955 met Molotov in hospital and indignantly asked:

- Why did you, a member of the Politburo, allow your wife to be arrested?

Not a single muscle trembled on Molotov's face.

"Because I am a member of the Politburo and had to obey party discipline. I obeyed.

There was no discipline here. The arrest of his wife was a colossal tragedy for him, but Vyacheslav Mikhailovich did not dare to object to Stalin, otherwise he would immediately go after her.

Many of Stalin's comrades-in-arms almost did not live to be a hundred years old. In addition to natural health, a stable nervous system and complete ruthlessness saved them from all trials. Neither the suicide of a brother, nor the exile of his wife, nor the arrest of his son could either disturb their Olympian tranquility or shake their readiness to serve the leader.

Why do gerontologists travel to the Caucasus and ask the highlanders to share the secrets of their longevity? It is necessary to understand how these people almost reached 100 - Molotov, Malenkov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich? Saved by the complete lack of conscience, honor, compassion for other people's misfortunes and self-esteem? .. On the podium of the mausoleum

the faces of the leaders seemed so significant, the gestures - full of special meaning. On closer inspection, these people are dull and miserable. And this explains a lot in the fate of our country.

Several decades of existence of the Soviet system have yielded results. There are no defense mechanisms left in society. The court was included in the system of suppression. Morality and morality were crushed by total hypocrisy. Shot without guilt. The wives of the executed were imprisoned. And even the children faced a sad fate: those who were older were sent to corrective labor colonies, the little ones were sent to orphanages.

Subsequently, Molotov, who was then the head of government, was asked: why did the repressions extend to women and children?

- What does it mean - why? - Vyacheslav Mikhailovich was surprised at the naive question. They must be isolated to some extent. And so, of course, they would be the distributors of all sorts of complaints ... And decomposition to a certain extent.

They did not want the wives and children of the repressed to remain free to complain to their neighbors and colleagues, telling them that their husbands and fathers were innocent. Sowed doubts about the correctness of Stalin's decisions.

The peculiarity of the Great Terror was its indiscriminate nature. The most devoted servants of the regime were also sent to the camp or to the next world, deifying the leader. When the cell door slammed behind them, it seemed to them that this was a mistake or intrigues of the retinue deceiving the owner. But that was the system.

The meaning of repressions, all-Union cleansing, in modern terms, was totality. No exceptions! Cases are started on everyone, at any moment everyone can be arrested. And no one could know who would be next. What began as a liquidation of longtime opponents has evolved into a policy of "total liquidation". It has reached incredible proportions. And it was carried out with extreme cruelty.

The arrested could not stand the torture, even such strong ones as the former Baltic sailor Pavel Efimovich Dybenko or Marshal Vasily Konstantinovich Blyukher, who died in the cell from beatings. The leader considered interrogations with partiality and torture to be a necessary thing. People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the era of the Great Terror Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov liked Stalin because he did not shun rough work. One of the investigators of the secret political department of the NKVD told his comrades how the People's Commissar came into his office. He asked if the defendant confessed.

- When I said no, Nikolai Ivanovich would turn around and bang him in the face.
And he explained: "This is how they should be interrogated!"

Yezhov came to the Central Committee from the Lubyanka. One of the members of the Politburo noticed on his tunic bloodstains:

- What's happened?

"You can be proud of such stains," Yezhov replied. "This is the blood of the enemies of the revolution.

They didn't torture everyone. High-ranking detainees were explained that they needed to help the investigation, then there would be a chance for leniency. The arrested were looking for an explanation for what was happening and, apparently, came to the conclusion that Stalin, due to the highest state interests, needed a show trial. In this case, you need to fulfill his will. Then they will be pardoned.

The recent Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Georgy Evgenyevich Prokofiev, refused to sign the testimony composed by the investigator. Yezhov came for interrogation. Prokofiev, out of habit, jumped up and drew himself up to attention. Yezhov said to him in his own way:

- You have to testify.

The former deputy people's commissar clicked his heels:

- Yes sir!

And signed incredible inventions. He believed that Yezhov would have mercy on him. A Nikolay Ivanovich deceived: Prokofiev was shot along with those whom he had recently imprisoned.

Yezhov's heirs also tried. Knowing that Stalin appreciates this, Merkulov in the summer of 1941

years he himself beat the recent Chief of the General Staff Kirill Afanasyevich Meretskov and People's Commissar for Armaments Boris Lvovich Vannikov. In 1953 he admitted:

"They were beaten mercilessly. It was a real meat grinder. In this way extorted indications.

In those first weeks of the war, when, it would seem, all forces should be concentrated on rebuffing the enemy, the NKVD was building a case about an imaginary underground government, which, they say, was waiting for the arrival of Hitler ... But in this case, Merkulov tried in vain. His victims were incredibly lucky - Stalin needed both of those arrested. Boris Vannikov spent a month and a half behind bars and was appointed deputy people's commissar, after the war he would become one of the leaders of the atomic project. Kirill Meretskov spent two and a half months, went out, fought, received marshal's shoulder straps.

The mass terror that followed the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov on December 1, 1934 was like an avalanche. She also does not choose victims, but simply crushes all living things. Therefore, the victims of the Great Terror were people who were incredibly far from political and social life - workers, peasants, petty employees - and the Chekists themselves, who went into the furnace after their victims.

And here is the main question: why did Stalin start all this?

Such a system lives by its own laws. The periods of moderation are forced and very short. The leader needed to instill fear in everyone, strengthen his power and rally the people. Without fear, the system did not work. Terror is the most effective tool to keep the country in obedience.

Fear revealed all the evil that is in a person. It began to seem that the proportion of scoundrels was higher than usual. It was difficult to resist because the abyss opened up before the man. The result was a paralysis of any initiative and an unwillingness to take responsibility. Fear and distrust became the main driving forces in Soviet society. forces.

During the years of the Great Terror, the highest nomenklatura was replaced by nine-tenths. Young people without education and special advantages made a dizzying career. Of course they supported the repression! Owing to everything to Stalin, they were in a hurry to prove their loyalty to the leader. They didn't have to explain anything. They expressed no doubts and easily adapted to any turn of the leader's line.

Members of the Politburo have become just helpers. Stalin no longer needed to get along with his comrades in the party leadership, to convince them that he was right. There was no need to win anyone's hearts. It is enough to keep everyone in fear by imprisoning their wives or assistants. Why be funny and attractive? The sole owner of the country could afford to remain as he really is.

And the country has changed.

Television hasn't arrived yet. The main method of propaganda campaigns is rallies and meetings, at which the degree of emotions was raised so that people themselves began to demand blood. And it turned out that the destruction of enemies is the will of the people. Entire generations were brought up in an atmosphere of hatred and relentless exposure of the fifth column.

These were disastrous years for the country's economy, for science and art. To express even a small fraction of what thinking people felt and sensed was mortally dangerous. We have little idea how many people wished to take part in the destruction of the non-existent internal enemy! Someone hoped to save himself by pushing another into the abyss. Someone saw that the repressions open the way to the top, and hurried excel...

On March 4, 1949, Molotov lost his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs. He remained deputy head of government, but Stalin no longer instructed him to chair meetings of the Council of Ministers.

Polina Semyonovna was interrogated at the Lubyanka. Every day Molotov drove past the building of the Ministry of State Security in a black limousine with guards. But he didn't even dare

ask about her fate. True, she was spared the beatings - after all, the fate of her husband had not yet been finally decided.

Zhemchuzhina was charged under the infamous Article 58, under which all political prisoners were shot or imprisoned. Article 58 consisted of many points. The combination of accusations made it possible to pass any sentence - from exile to execution.

The investigators made the following bouquet for her:

58-1 "a" - attempted treason committed by non-military personnel;

58-10 - anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation;

58-11 - organizational activities aimed at preparing or committing counter-revolutionary crimes.

December 29, 1949 Special meeting at the Ministry of State Security sentenced her to five years in exile. She was sent to the Kustanai region of Kazakhstan.

Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria sometimes whispered in Molotov's ear:

Polina is alive.

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich continued to live in the Kremlin. After the Pearl was imprisoned, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich was left alone. His daughter Svetlana settled in the city, where she felt freer than in the Kremlin. Father and daughter hardly communicated. If Svetlana visited him, at the entrance to the arch of the Borovitsky Gate, officers of the Main Security Directorate of the Ministry of State Security checked her documents and reported to the duty officer. The wives and children of Politburo members had special passes issued by the commandant of the Kremlin.

Molotov was still a member of the Politburo, and among the people he was still perceived as the closest person to the leader. His portraits were worn at demonstrations. His name was given to cities and collective farms. He spent the whole day sitting in his huge office, reading newspapers and Tass news bulletins, going home for dinner, returning to his office. He had no real business.

Stalin dealt with him at the party congress.

In violation of the charter, party congresses were not held for many years. The previous one, XVIII, took place in March 1939. The 19th Congress opened on October 5, 1952, Sunday, at seven o'clock in the evening. The introductory speech was delivered by Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, whom the not too well-informed population of the country still considered Stalin's closest ally. Molotov could not even imagine what an unpleasant surprise awaited him after congress.

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich asked to honor the memory of the deceased comrades. He recalled the hostile capitalist encirclement, that the imperialist camp was preparing a new world war, but reassured the delegates:

"Our party came to the 19th Congress as powerful and united as ever.

And finished bravura:

- Long live and live for many years our dear, great Stalin!

All speeches at the congress ended with toasts to the leader. The delegates automatically stood up and applauded. All speeches were extremely gray and boring, not a single living word. Those sitting in the hall kept track of who was given the floor and when (this testified to the position in the hierarchy of power), who was criticized and who was praised.

Stalin was already weak and refused to give the main report. Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov read the report of the Central Committee instead of him. He was both secretary of the Central Committee and deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, in the apparatus he was perceived as Stalin's deputy. He stressed the growing danger from the West:

"We would have found ourselves defenseless in the face of enemies and in the face of the danger of defeat if we had not strengthened our state, our army, our punitive and intelligence agencies.

Malenkov spoke not only about the fantastic successes of his native country, but also about

the plight of the West, the impoverishment of American workers, the fall in the purchasing power of the dollar, the rising cost of living and lowering wages.

Growing party ideologue Mikhail Andreyevich Suslov rejoiced at the success of public education in the Soviet Union and informed the delegates about the deep crisis overseas, where the working people are kept in "darkness and ignorance":

- There are over ten million illiterates in the United States of America; about one third of school-age children are not in school. As regards secondary education, and especially higher education, it is the monopoly of the ruling classes and is inaccessible to the children of working people.

Stalin nevertheless spoke - briefly - on the last day of the congress, at the evening meeting October 14, after the election of a new composition of the Central Committee and the Central Audit Commission.

Colonel Nikolai Petrovich Novik, Deputy Head of the Security Department MGB, recalled:

"While behind the stage, I became an accidental witness, one might say, of a comic scene. Malenkov, Beria, Kaganovich, Molotov, Mikoyan surrounded Stalin's assistant Poskrebyshev and literally interrogated him whether Stalin would speak at the congress and what materials he prepared for him. Poskrebyshev replied that he knew nothing about it, did not prepare materials.

Stalin made a short speech at the end of the congress, holding in his hands a small quarter of a sheet on which something was written by hand. I saw that Stalin did not have a well-coordinated team: how much he did not trust his comrades-in-arms, even if he did not inform them whether he would speak at the congress and what he intended to talk about!

The leader thanked the fraternal parties for their support and promised, in turn, to help them in their further "struggle for liberation."

The state security officer who was sitting in the hall, who got a seat next to the People's Artist of the USSR Nikolai Konstantinovich Cherkasov, said: "Our eyes saw a radiance of light above the head of I.V. Stalin during his speech. Without saying a word, we simultaneously said: "Nimbus." There was no other bright source of light in the hall, except for the halo above I.V. Stalin. This phenomenon occurs, apparently, with a great strength of emotional stress. All this went on for several seconds at the moment when I.V. Stalin pronounced with a rise the words of the call - to raise the banner of the national liberation movement of the peoples.

After the congress, a reception was held in the Kremlin. Foreign guests were greeted by Marshal Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov. He made all the toasts. Stalin was in excellent spirits.

On October 16, the traditional after the congress, the first plenum of the new composition of the Central Committee was held, at which it was only necessary to elect the governing bodies - the presidium and the secretariat. Nothing foreshadowed the storm that would suddenly break out at the plenum. Transcript, unfortunately, was not conducted. What happened that day in the Sverdlovsk Hall of the Kremlin is known only from the notes of the plenum participants. They differ in details, but the main thing is to express the same.

Before the start of the plenum, members of the top leadership gathered in the presidium room next to the Sverdlovsk Hall. Stalin usually arrived ten to fifteen minutes before the start and warned his comrades-in-arms about his intention to remove or appoint someone. This time, Stalin came to the very opening, looked into the room of the presidium and, without sitting down, ordered:

- Let's go to the plenum.

Everything that happened next came as a surprise even to his close associates.

The beginning of the plenum did not portend any surprises. The new members of the Central Committee stood up and applauded. Stalin waved his hand and muttered:

"Never do that here.

Alexei Matveyevich Rumyantsev in the summer of 1952 became the head of the Central Committee department

economic and historical sciences and higher educational institutions. At the XIX Congress he was elected a member of the Central Committee, so he was present at the plenum. Judging by his recollections, the leader came in a disgusting mood, gloomy and gloomy. Looked into the hall unblinking yellow eyes.

- Why did they explode? he asked in a low voice and with distaste. - What do you need here, session Supreme Council or a rally in defense of peace?!

The members of the Central Committee were confused.

- Sit down! Stalin commanded. - Gathered to decide important party business, and then they put on a performance.

The regular rituals did not apply to plenums, which the newcomers did not suspect. Malenkov immediately gave the floor to the leader. Stalin in a gray jacket made of a thin carpeted coat walked along the presidium table and said:

So, we held a party congress. It went well, and it may seem to many that we have unity. However, we do not have such unity. There is a deep split in the party. I must report to the plenum that there is a split in our Politburo. Molotov occupies anti-Leninist positions. Mikoyan is making mistakes of a Trotskyist nature... They ask why we have significantly expanded the composition of the Central Committee? We, the old people, will die, but we need to think to whom, into whose hands we will pass the baton of our great cause. This requires younger, more dedicated people, politicians. It will take ten, no, all fifteen years to bring up a statesman. That is why we expanded the membership of the Central Committee...

They ask why we dismissed prominent party and state leaders from important ministerial posts? We dismissed the ministers Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and others and replaced them with new employees. Why? On what basis? The job of a minister is a man's job. It requires great strength, specific knowledge and health. That is why we have relieved some distinguished comrades of their posts and appointed new, more qualified workers in their place. They are young people, full of strength and energy. As for the most prominent political and state figures, they remain prominent figures. We transferred them to work as deputy chairmen of the Council of Ministers. So I don't know how many deputies I have now...

His words sounded like a frank mockery of the old guard. But that was just an introduction. The leader suddenly attacked his closest associates Molotov and Mikoyan. Those sitting in the hall were shocked, although Vyacheslav Mikhailovich and Anastas Ivanovich should have expected something like this:

- It is impossible not to touch on the wrong behavior of some prominent political figures, if we are talking about unity in our ranks. I have in mind Comrades Molotov and Mikoyan.

The hall is frozen. Nobody expected this. The newcomers did not even imagine that the leader treated people in such a way, whose portraits were worn around Red Square for decades. Stalin brought accusations against his comrades-in-arms that led to capital punishment:

- Molotov is a man devoted to our cause. Without hesitation, without hesitation, he will give his life for the party. But you can not ignore his unworthy deeds. Comrade Molotov, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, being "under Chartreuse" at a diplomatic reception, gave his consent to the British Ambassador to publish bourgeois newspapers and magazines in our country. On what basis? Isn't it clear that the bourgeoisie is our class enemy and that spreading the bourgeois press among the Soviet people will bring nothing but harm.

This is Comrade Molotov's first political mistake. And what is the value of Molotov's proposal to transfer the Crimea to the Jews? This is Comrade Molotov's gross mistake. On what basis did Comrade Molotov make such a proposal? We have Jewish autonomy. Isn't that enough? Let this autonomy develop. And Comrade Molotov should not be an advocate for illegal Jewish claims to the Soviet Crimea. Comrade

Molotov misbehaves as a member of the Politburo.

"It felt like a piece of ice had been put on my heart," recalled Dmitry Trofimovich Shepilov, editor-in-chief of Pravda, who was sitting in the Sverdlovsk Hall of the Kremlin. Molotov sat motionless at the presidium table. He was silent, and not a single muscle twitched on his face. Through the glasses of his pince-nez, he looked straight into the hall and only occasionally made such movements on the cloth of the table with three fingers of his right hand, as if crushing a crumb of bread.

"Comrade Molotov," Stalin said, "respects his wife so much that we will not have time to make a decision of the Politburo on this or that important political issue, as this quickly becomes the property of Comrade Zhemchuzhina. It turns out that some invisible thread connects the Politburo with Molotov's wife and her friends. And she is surrounded by friends who cannot be trusted. It is clear that such behavior of a member of the Politburo is unacceptable.

The writer Konstantin Mikhailovich Simonov, who was present at the plenum - he was elected a candidate member of the Central Committee, recalled: "Stalin beat on the idea that Molotov was the hardest, most unbending follower of Stalin. He beat treacherously and purposefully, he beat, knocking out his possible successors ... He did not want Molotov after him, if something happened to him, to remain the first figure in the state and in the party. And his speech completely ruled out such a possibility.

- Now about Comrade Mikoyan. - Stalin attacked another of his faithful comrades-in-arms. - You see, he objects to the increase in the agricultural tax on the peasants. Who is he, our Anastas Mikoyan? What is not clear to him? We have a strong alliance with the peasants. We assigned the land to the collective farms forever. And they must pay their due debt to the state, so we cannot agree with Comrade Mikoyan's position.

There was dead silence in the hall. Nothing like this has been heard in the Kremlin for a long time - since the pre-war mass repressions. The leader spoke for almost an hour and a half, and the entire plenum lasted a little over two hours. When the leader finished his speech, Mikoyan hurried down to the podium and began to justify himself, referring to economic calculations. Stalin cut him off and, shaking his index finger, said menacingly:

- You see, he himself is confused and wants to confuse us in this clear, fundamental question.

Anastas Ivanovich muttered:

- Comrades, I admit that I also made mistakes, but not intentional ...

Stalin waved his hand, and the audience obediently responded:

- Stop self-justifying! We know you, comrade Mikoyan! Do not try to mislead the Central Committee!

Stunned, Mikoyan fell silent and left the podium. Molotov also admitted his mistakes, made excuses, said that he was and remains a faithful student of Comrade Stalin. He abruptly interrupted Molotov:

- Nonsense! I don't have any students. We are all students of the great Lenin.

In other words, the leader did not even want to listen to excuses. It was a bad sign. Sometimes repentance saved from punishment. Stalin often arranged such provocations and carefully watched how the accused reacted. He believed that if a person is guilty of something, he will definitely give himself away. The main thing is to take him by surprise.

But then it became clear that the leader did not intend to pardon.

The members of the Central Committee realized that Molotov's career had come to an end.

Having dealt with his comrades-in-arms, Stalin said that it was necessary to resolve organizational issues and elect the leading bodies of the party. He took out a handwritten paper from his jacket pocket and said:

- It would be possible to elect, for example, such comrades to the Presidium of the Central Committee ...

He read out a long list. It included all members of the Politburo of the old convocation, except for the already very ill Andrei Andreevich Andreev, the former chairman of the Party Control Committee. Stalin explained:

- Regarding the respected Andreev, everything is clear: he was completely deaf, he does not hear anything,

cannot work. Let it heal!

The leader included in the presidium of the Central Committee a number of new and relatively young party workers like Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev. Stalin wanted to look at them. I was preparing to replace the old leadership with them.

Just as unexpectedly for those present, he proposed to elect a bureau of the Presidium of the Central Committee (this body did not exist before and was not provided for by the party charter) - by analogy with the already existing bureau of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers.

In the bureau, the leader included, in addition to himself, his deputies in the government - Beria, Bulganin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Saburov, as well as the secretary of the Central Committee Khrushchev.

Stalin did not include Molotov in the Bureau of the Presidium of the Central Committee. As, however, and Mikoyan. As for Voroshilov, the marshal, it seems, ended up in the bureau of the presidium by accident. Stalin compiled the list himself, without consulting anyone. It seems that the hand, out of habit, brought out the familiar surname of a person who was once very close to him. After the plenum, seeing Voroshilov on the list of bureau members, Stalin asked in astonishment:

– How did it happen? How did Voroshilov get into the Bureau of the Presidium?

Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev recalled that those present exchanged glances and someone timidly remarked:

- You yourself called him when you performed.

"I don't understand how it happened," Stalin repeated with displeasure.

When the elections for the secretariat of the Central Committee began, Stalin again read out the names of the secretaries. But he did not name himself. Malenkov, who was sitting in the presidium, extended his hand in the direction of the podium where Stalin stood. A chorus of voices rang out from the hall as the gesture was everything understandable:

- Comrade Stalin!

The leader said softly:

- No need for Stalin, I'm already old. Need to rest.

And from the hall rushed:

- Comrade Stalin!

Everyone stood up and applauded. Stalin waved his hand, calling for calm down, and said:

- No, release me from the duties of both the General Secretary of the Central Committee and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

Everyone was dumbfounded. Malenkov hurried down to the podium and said:

"Comrades, we must all unanimously ask Comrade Stalin, our leader and teacher, to continue to be General Secretary.

The applause and shouts began again:

- Please stay! Please take your request back!

Stalin went to the podium:

- Applause is not needed at the plenum of the Central Committee. It is necessary to resolve issues without emotions, in a businesslike manner. And I ask to be relieved of my duties as Secretary General and Chairman of the Council of Ministers. I'm already old. I don't read papers. Choose someone else!

Marshal Semyon Konstantinovich Timoshenko, the former people's commissar of defense, got up:

- Comrade Stalin, the people will not understand this. We all, as one, choose you as our leader. There can be no other solution.

The audience applauded. Stalin looked into the hall for a long time, then waved his hand, as if in annoyance:

- Well, let there be Stalin.

The post of general secretary was formally abandoned. Stalin was elected

"simple" secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

After the XIX Party Congress, on October 18, 1952, Molotov was also released from observation for the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Stalin almost did not convene the Presidium of the Central Committee in its entirety, but created fives, sixes, and threes to solve certain problems. And it turned out that a member of the presidium Molotov

was not included in these threes and fives. This meant that no materials were sent to him, they were not invited to meetings, and they did not ask his opinion. Stalin did not call him and did not invite him to his place.

One of Vyacheslav Mikhailovich's assistants said:

"In those days, it was just a pity to look at him.

Molotov understood that everything was just beginning. The worst is ahead.

On January 21, 1953, Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina, who was serving a link, was charged with new charges. This time, MGB investigators charged her with more serious crimes, which made it possible to hide her forever in the Gulag. She was going to be tried under Article 58-1 "a" (treason to the Motherland, and not preparation for treason, as in the previous verdict), Article 58-10 (anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation) and Article 58-11 (organizational activity aimed at preparing or committing counter-revolutionary crimes).

They wanted to fasten Molotov's wife to the "case of doctors", who were threatened with a death sentence. To build up, to enlarge this "conspiracy". Stalin suspected that Molotov - American spy, recruited while on a trip to the United States...

Line two Farewell to the harmonist

Veterans - Molotov, Mikoyan, Voroshilov - tired of Stalin. He wanted to see new people around him. Methodically removed veterans from power. Removed key positions. Undermined their authority.

The leader himself is old and tired. Age and health did not allow him to fully engage in the affairs of the country. But he could still shoot, plant and shoot. One night, having gathered colleagues at his dacha, he warned:

- You're old. I will replace you all.

After his death, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Marshal Voroshilov talked with Vasily Stalin - he scolded him for alcoholism. Noticed:

"Your father has been very odd in recent years. He called me an English spy.

Had Stalin lived longer, some members of the Presidium of the Central Committee would also have been on the death list.

The leader did not know how to get rid of Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov, who at one time was the second person in the party. After the 18th (1939) Congress, Stalin instructed him to form the party apparatus. Before Zhdanov, Kaganovich was in charge of all party affairs. When he replaced Stalin in the thirties, he even sat in his office. But at the 18th Congress Lazar Moiseevich was not elected Secretary of the Central Committee for the first time...

It was not difficult for Stalin to get rid of anyone. The difficulty was that the name of Zhdanov was associated with large shares that could not be questioned - they determined the spiritual atmosphere in the country after the war.

The most famous of them were held a year after the Victory, in 1946, - "About the magazines Zvezda and Leningrad" (August 14), "About the repertoire of drama theaters and measures to improve it" (August 26) and the film "Big Life" (dated September 4). As a result, Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko were expelled from the Writers' Union, and the second series of the film "Big Life" was banned for "ideological and political depravity, a false, distorted image of Soviet people".

Silva Gitovich, who worked in the Leningrad branch of the Writers' Union, remembered for the rest of her life how Zhdanov spoke at Smolny about Zoshchenko and Akhmatova: "On the podium, Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov is imposing, stout, with bald patches at the temples, with sleek plump hands. He speaks smoothly, not from a piece of paper, he quotes poems by heart. Everything he says is terrible. With each of his phrases, the tension grows more and more. There is an unsettling silence in the hall. Everyone is afraid to look at each other."

The case was not limited to one poetess, one prose writer and one film. It was a lesson to the rest. The resolutions of the Central Committee crossed out the hopes of the intelligentsia that after the war the repressions would stop and freer times would come.

On January 5, 1948, Stalin and Zhdanov watched Vano Muradeli's opera *The Great Friendship* at the Bolshoi Theater. They didn't like the show. Mikhail Borisovich Khrapchenko (a well-known literary critic and future academician) was removed from his post as chairman of the Committee for the Arts "as not providing proper leadership."

Stalin turned to the then head of the agitprop of the Central Committee, Dmitry Shepilov:

- Listen, Comrade Shepilov, why don't we have Soviet operas? Everyone there Italian, German, good Russians are there, but there are no Soviet ones?

Shepilov reported:

- Comrade Stalin, this is not entirely accurate. We have good operas. For example, "Quiet Don" by Dzerzhinsky, "Into the Storm" by Khrennikov.

Stalin did not hear him:

- We need to do this. Understand why not, and create the conditions for such operas to exist.

In February, the Central Committee issued a separate resolution "On Muradeli's opera *'Great Friendship'*". In the same year, the All-Union Congress of Soviet Composers was convened and a three-day meeting of musical figures was held in the Central Committee. For formalism, not only Vano Ilyich Muradeli, but also such outstanding composers as Dmitry Dmitrievich Shostakovich and Sergei Sergeevich Prokofiev were severely denounced.

Zhdanov was instructed to chair meetings of the organizing bureau and manage the work of the secretariat of the Central Committee, which meant that he was the second in the party hierarchy. Foreign journalists noted that in Leningrad there are more portraits of Zhdanov than Stalin. They did not see such "iconography" in any other city of Stalinist Russia.

At dinners, Stalin seated Zhdanov next to him and appointed him toastmaster. True, every time he explained to Andrei Alexandrovich when and for whom to drink, and sometimes he literally dictated the text of the toast. Other members of the Politburo, who made their way upstairs with sweat and blood, did not like Zhdanov, who, it seemed to them, was too easy to rise up the party ladder. They envied him - how without it!

"He played the accordion and the piano well," Khrushchev wrote. - I liked it. Kaganovich spoke of him contemptuously: "Accordion player." Kaganovich often said sarcastically:

- Here you don't need great skill to work, you need to have a well-suspended language, be able to tell jokes well, sing ditties, and you can live in the world.

Frankly, when I looked closer at Zhdanov, in a working environment, I began to agree with Kaganovich. Indeed, when we visited Stalin (at that time Stalin had already begun to drink and get others drunk, Zhdanov suffered from the same weakness), he strums on the piano and sings, and Stalin sings along with him. These songs could only be sung at Stalin's, because they could not be repeated anywhere else. Only hookers in taverns could sing them, and no one else.

Why did Andrei Alexandrovich fall into disfavor?

Stalin constantly changed cadres, put forward new people. And it was time for Zhdanov to leave. There were no personal claims against him. He just turned out to be superfluous in the political game. Stalin lost interest in Zhdanov, considered him a burden.

Khrushchev recalled:

"Everyone dined at Stalin's and finished dinner to such an extent that Zhdanov could no longer walk. He wanted, as had happened before, to spend the night with Stalin. It wasn't there. Stalin tells him:

- You have your own apartment.

And literally kicked him out."

Zhdanov suffered from severe angina and drank heavily. Even Stalin, who liked to get people drunk, sometimes shouted at Zhdanov, and instead of wine, he obediently poured

fruit water. This was noticed by Milovan Djilas, one of the leaders of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, who visited Moscow, who observed Zhdanov at Stalin's dacha and came to the conclusion that this was a typical cynic intellectual. Andrei Alexandrovich was the only one at the table drinking orange juice. I explained to the Yugoslav guest that because of heart disease. Djilas, still quite a young man, asked naively:

- And what are the consequences of this disease?

Zhdanov replied ironically:

- I can die at any moment, but I can live for a very long time.

Stalin ruined Molotov's reputation by consistently accusing his wife of anti-party and anti-state actions. In the case of Zhdanov, he hit his son.

Yuri Andreevich Zhdanov graduated from Moscow State University in 1941 and received a diploma in organic chemistry. But it was not possible to work in the specialty. Astute personnel officers saw political talents in the son of an influential father. During the war, Zhdanov Jr. was enrolled as an instructor in the political department of the Red Army, led by Alexander Sergeevich Shcherbakov, a nominee of Zhdanov's father. In the summer of forty-three, he was transferred to the newly formed department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks for relations with foreign communist parties.

In the forty-fifth, Yuri Zhdanov returned as an assistant to the chemical department of the university, where he defended his Ph.D. thesis. In the autumn of the forty-seventh, the younger Zhdanov was twice invited to his place for a conversation by Stalin, who was resting on the Cold River, not far from Gagra. After this conversation, at the age of twenty-eight, Yuri Andreevich became the head of the natural sciences sector in the propaganda and agitation department of the Central Committee of the Party.

At the all-Union seminar of lecturers, he delivered a report on the situation in biology. Young Zhdanov, a future corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences and rector of the Rostov University, criticized the "people's academician" and brilliant hoaxer Trofim Denisovich Lysenko.

The performance of the younger Zhdanov was not amateur performance. Prominent biologists complained about Lysenko, who argued that his activities were detrimental to agriculture. None of the miracle varieties of wheat he promised ever appeared. But he successfully prevented other biologists from introducing their varieties, bred as a result of long breeding work.

But Zhdanov's speech was contrary to the interests of another influential member of the Politburo - Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov. Stalin instructed him to oversee the agricultural department of the Central Committee, approved him as chairman of the Bureau of the Council of Ministers for Agriculture. Georgy Maksimilianovich, a city man who worked all his life in the organizational department, found no other way to change the situation in the agricultural sector than to rely on Lysenko's fantastic promises. Instead, he undertook to save the "people's academician" from criticism. A passionate admirer of Lysenko was the Minister of Agriculture Ivan Alexandrovich Benediktov.

Malenkov reported to Stalin about the performance of the younger Zhdanov. The leader favored the young man, but then he was indignant: no one dares to decide the fate of such a large figure. He is the only one! There was a welcome reason to hit the elder Zhdanov.

He gathered the members of the Politburo and said ominously:

- We need to discuss an unheard of fact. Agitprop, without the knowledge of the Central Committee, convened an all-Union seminar, and at this seminar academician Lysenko was butchered. By what right? All of our agriculture rests on Lysenko. It is necessary to roughly punish the guilty, support Lysenko and debunk our homegrown Morganists.

Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov felt very unwell, he came to meetings with difficulty, literally fainted. And the face is like that of a dead man. On July 5, 1948, after a consultation with the best doctors, the head of the Kremlin Medical and Sanitary Department, Professor Pyotr Ivanovich Yegorov, sent a medical report to Stalin:

"Recently, in the state of health of Comrade. Zhdanova A.A. significant

deterioration - the phenomena of heart failure have intensified so much that shortness of breath occurs even with normal movements. The heart is greatly enlarged, there are signs of stagnation in the lungs and liver. Due to the weakening of cardiac activity, blood pressure dropped significantly.

In addition, on the basis of the intense spasm of the cerebral vessels in a limited area, malnutrition developed, which was expressed in a violation of sensitivity on the right arm and the right half of the face.

It is necessary now to provide Comrade. Zhdanov A.A. leave for two months, of which a month should be spent on treatment subject to strict bed rest and a month for relax".

Stalin wrote on the conclusion: "Where is the vacation, where is the treatment?" The next day the decision of the Politburo to grant a two-month vacation was ready.

Shepilov sympathetically said to Zhdanov:

You need to go to the hospital immediately!

Zhdanov replied:

- No, the Politburo decided that I should take a vacation and go to Valdai. Comrade Stalin said that there is very good air for the cores.

Stalin admonished the doctors who treated him:

You take him for walks more often. And he's overweight...

Walks in a climate unfavorable for the cores will quickly bring Zhdanov to a heart attack ...

On July 15, five days after the elder Zhdanov went on vacation, the Politburo dealt a blow to his son: "In connection with the incorrect report of Comrade Zhdanov, which does not reflect the position of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. Zhdanov on issues of biological science, to accept the proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture of the USSR, the Ministry of State Farms of the USSR and the Academy of Agricultural Sciences named after Lenin to discuss the report of Acad. T.D. Lysenko on the topic "On the situation in Soviet biological science", referring to the publication of this report in the press.

The infamous session of the Academy, which took place from July 31 to August 7, 1948, at which Trofim Lysenko made a report "On the situation in biological science", had nothing to do with scientific discussion. At the session, it was said directly:

- We will not discuss with the Morganists, we will continue to expose them as representatives of a harmful and ideologically alien, essentially pseudoscientific trend.

Weisman-Morganists were scientists who did not consider genetics a pseudoscience. The German August Weismann and the American Thomas Hunt Morgan are among the creators of genetics. Morgan, the author of the chromosome theory of heredity, was elected an honorary member of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1932. But in the 1940s, the label "Weismannist Morganist" sounded as scary as "Trotskyist."

All the newspapers wrote about the "defeat of the anti-scientific trend" in biology. And in essence, there was the destruction of domestic science, which led not only to the plight of the agrarian sector of the economy, but also predetermined Russia's lag in many areas of science and technology.

Lysenko's report was personally edited by the leader. Trofim Denisovich kept a copy with the leader's corrections as the greatest value. After the death of the "People's Academician", KGB officers arrived at his house, examined the archive and interrogated his relatives.

On December 8, 1976, the chairman of the KGB, Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, reported to the Central Committee:

"His correspondence with the Central Committee of the CPSU, the MK of the CPSU, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR on issues of scientific activity and the situation around him was discovered. During the conversation with the sons of Lysenko T.D. it was established that they, their mother and sister kept one copy of the photocopy of the report "On the situation in Soviet biological science" with amendments by I.V. Stalin, with whom the academician spoke in August

1948 at the session of the All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences. IN AND. Lenin.

One of these copies of a photocopy of the report is the relatives of academician Lysenko T.D. they refused to hand over them, they kept them as a family heirloom and assured that they would not hand them over to anyone and would not allow them to be used for negative purposes ... Due to the fact that if they got to the West, these documents could be used in a way that was unfavorable for the USSR, they were taken to the KGB under the Council of Ministers of the USSR and sent to the Central Committee of the CPSU.

Trofim Lysenko's report could not possibly be a secret document. At one time it was widely published in the Soviet press. The Chekists illegally confiscated "family heirlooms" only to hide the fact that Lysenko's report was read and ruled by Stalin himself...

"Some of the scientists hastened to ridicule us," Trofim Lysenko said in 1948 with a menacing voice. But there is nothing to be afraid of laughter. Only those who feel guilty are afraid of laughter. We, with the participation of numerous hut laboratories, are doing scientific work that is useful for the collective farms. After all, some people have tried to laugh about vernalization, and about the summer planting of potatoes, and about the minting of cotton. But now, perhaps, those who maliciously laughed at all this are no longer laughing.

Yuri Zhdanov had to apologize in writing. The repentance of the son of a member of the Politburo is an unprecedented thing! - On August 7, on the last day of the session of the All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences, which became an incredible triumph for Lysenko, Pravda published.

Yuri Zhdanov wrote:

"From the very first day of my work in the department of science, representatives of formal genetics began to come to me with complaints that the new varieties of useful plants obtained by them (buckwheat, kok-saghyz, geranium, hemp, citrus), which have improved qualities, are not introduced into production and encounter resistance from supporters of Academician T.D. Lysenko...

My mistake is that, having decided to take under protection these practical results, which were the "gifts of the Danaans", I did not subject the fundamental methodological flaws of Mendelian-Morganian genetics to merciless criticism ...

I realize that this is a businesslike approach to practice, the pursuit of a penny.

It was not by chance that Stalin forced the young Zhdanov to repent in public. It was a blow to reputation of Zhdanov Sr.

In Valdai, Andrei Alexandrovich also learned that all personnel matters were leaving him for another secretary of the Central Committee, Malenkov. They couldn't stand each other. It was Stalin's signal, which meant the removal of Zhdanov.

The apparatchiks on Staraya Square saw how Malenkov was increasing his influence, having at his disposal the powerful apparatus of the Central Committee's personnel department: "The staffs of numerous departments of this department were quickly recruited. The corridors of the premises where it was located were constantly filled with specialists, university graduates or invited from different regions - some for the first acquaintance, some already for appointment ... And Malenkov increasingly interfered in the affairs of the Propaganda and Agitation Department with his motor assertiveness.

Andrei Alexandrovich became very ill. The best doctors were called to Valdai from the medical and sanitary department of the Kremlin. They examined the patient. Nothing dangerous was found. Lidia Feodosevna Timashuk, who was in charge of the electrocardiography room at the Kremlin hospital on Granovsky Street, did not agree with the Kremlin luminaries. Timashuk, along with the equipment, was delivered to Valdai by a special plane. Having made a cardiogram, she diagnosed: "myocardial infarction in the anterior wall of the left ventricle and interventricular septum."

The doctors who examined Zhdanov strongly rejected her diagnosis. They ordered me to rewrite the conclusion. Defending her case, she turned to the person who was responsible for the life and health of the members of the Politburo, the head of the Main Directorate of Security of the Ministry of State Security, Lieutenant General Nikolai Sidorovich Vlasik: "I think that

consultants and the attending physician underestimate the unquestionably grave condition of comrade. Zhdanov, allowing him to get out of bed, walk in the park, go to the cinema, which caused a second attack and could lead to a fatal outcome.

A few days later, on August 30, Zhdanov died. The autopsy results confirmed that Timashuk was right. She wrote a new letter: Zhdanov "was not given a particularly strict bed rest, which is necessary for a patient who had a myocardial infarction, he continued to receive general massage, was allowed to walk in the park, watch movies."

Timashuk called the Central Committee. She was stereotypically answered:

- Your letter has been received. You will be called soon.

They didn't call. General Vlasik disciplinedly reported her letter to Stalin. But that not interested in the letter, ordered to send it to the archive.

The doctors who treated Zhdanov were not punished, and Timashuk was demoted.

There are no witnesses who could reveal the true circumstances of Zhdanov's death. The first to hang himself seven days after Zhdanov's death was his housekeeper. Then the attending physician was destroyed, who did the autopsy together with Professor Vinogradov. In 1951, the commandant of the state dacha, where Zhdanov died, shot himself.

Stalin first removed Molotov's wife from work, expelled from the party and imprisoned her. The future of Yuri Zhdanov was also painted in gloomy colors. But Andrei Alexandrovich died, and the attitude towards the younger Zhdanov immediately changed for the better.

Yuri Andreevich remained in the apparatus of the Central Committee. The Zhdanov family continued to live in the Kremlin apartment. In the spring of the following year, 1949, Svetlana Stalin, with the blessing of her father, married Yuri Zhdanov. In 1952, young Zhdanov was appointed head of the department of natural and technical sciences and higher educational institutions of the Central Committee, and in the fall, at the party congress, he was elected a member of the Central Committee. But their marriage with Svetlana quickly collapsed. However, it was not divorce that ruined his promising party career, but the death of his father-in-law.

Line three Dead doesn't mean useless

But when the owner of socialist Bulgaria and the recent leader of the Comintern, the famous Georgy Dimitrov, died a year later, Stalin invited the Minister of Health of the USSR, Colonel-General Efim Ivanovich Smirnov, to his south. In the meantime, he asked who exactly treated Zhdanov and Dimitrov. Heard that the same doctors. Raised eyebrows:

"And both patients died?"

The minister, knowing what wonderful specialists he was talking about, began to convince him:

The doctors are not to blame.

How are they not to blame? - Stalin was surprised at the naivety of the minister.

Then, apparently, the first outlines of a conspiracy arose in his head - doctors who killed the leaders of the Soviet government. Secret arrests began of doctors, who were charged in the investigative unit of the Ministry of State Security for especially important cases of "sabotage treatment" of the country's leaders. Shcherbakov was the first on the list of victims.

The party boss of Moscow, Alexander Sergeevich Shcherbakov, was one of the youngest in the top leadership of the country. Before the war, Stalin made him Secretary of the Central Committee, a member of the Organizing Bureau and a candidate member of the Politburo. In addition, Shcherbakov became the head of the most important propaganda and agitation department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, that is, the head of all ideological work. During the war, he also headed the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army. A load that exceeds human capabilities.

The career of Alexander Sergeevich developed so successfully that over time he could well become the second person in the party, pushing aside other members of the Politburo. But, like Zhdanov, he had a heavy heart. Wrong way of life aggravated his ill health.

In addition, Alexander Sergeevich had an unimportant heredity.

In his autobiography, he wrote about his father: "I fell mentally ill and ended up in a hospital. The cause of the disease was also, obviously, the fact that the father suffered from alcoholism. What became further with the father, I have no idea.

A strange impression leaves a deliberate lack of interest in his own father. But at least the mention of his illness should have forced Alexander Sergeevich himself to take into account the tragic experience of his father. For example, participation in Stalin's feasts was definitely contraindicated for him. But Shcherbakov considered it lucky to receive an invitation to the dacha to the leader.

The owner of Moscow overstrained himself. On December 10, 1944, he suffered a massive heart attack. Doctors did not leave him hope for recovery, which was reported to Stalin. The leader, one must understand, wrote off his ally. Shcherbakov was worried.

On January 1, 1945, he congratulated the leader on the New Year:

"Dear Comrade Stalin!

With all my heart and a thousand times I thank you for your words of greeting, spoken by you on to my address on New Year's Eve.

To my great chagrin, the doctor deprived me of the opportunity to hear your voice in person. Your words are like living water to me. I will recover quickly and make up for my present idleness with work.

Thank you again, Comrade Stalin!

I congratulate you and your comrades on the coming New Year, which will be the year the most complete Stalinist victory

devoted to you

A. Shcherbakov .

On May 9, 1945, the day when the country celebrated the victory, Stalin called Shcherbakov and congratulated him. Alexander Sergeevich was happy. He called a car to drive through the jubilant city. The walk proved fatal. The next day he died.

Several years have passed since his death. And then they suddenly found and imprisoned the doctors who had once treated Shcherbakov. At the same time, the leaders of the Kremlin's Medical and Sanatorium Department, who provided medical assistance to all the authorities and their families, were also arrested. But this already allowed us to talk about a conspiracy.

"Treatment of comrade. Shcherbakov, - the Ministry of State Security reported to the leader, - conducted in a calculated and criminal manner. The enemy group operating in the Lechsanupra of the Kremlin sought to shorten their lives while treating the leaders of the party and government.

As the hero of one film says, "dead does not mean useless." The party leaders who had gone to another world were to posthumously play one more role in the grandiose performance started by Stalin.

The death of Zhdanov also came in handy. Now the actions of those who treated him were assessed differently. The doctors, the Chekists reported, "misdiagnosed the disease of Comrade. Zhdanov, having hidden his myocardial infarction, was prescribed a regimen contraindicated for this disease and, as a result, they killed him.

The leader recalled a long-standing letter written off to the archive by Lydia Timashuk, who reproached her fellow doctors for treating Zhdanov in the wrong way. One thing interfered: both the Minister of State Security, Colonel General Abakumov, and the head of the security department, Lieutenant General Vlasik, perfectly remembered that at one time Stalin was not interested in this letter. This sealed their fate.

Minister Abakumov has ceased to be needed at all. Like other old employees of the MGB. The same happened with his predecessors. Sooner or later, the moment came when Stalin came to the conclusion that a new person was needed in the Lubyanka. Abakumov, and so for too long - four years - sat in this place.

Vsevolod Nikolaevich Merkulov, who wrote theatrical plays in his spare time under the pseudonym Vsevolod Rokk, lasted less than three years as the owner of the Lubyanka.

Former head of military counterintelligence Viktor Semyonovich Abakumov - five. But Merkulov, who was removed from his post, having been pretty worried and collapsed with a heart attack, nevertheless got a new job, and Abakumov was imprisoned in the summer of 1951.

Stalin himself pronounced the verdict:

- Zhdanov was killed by Abakumov.

Line four Big purge at the Lubyanka

Once stately and self-confident Viktor Semenovich Abakumov liked Stalin. After the start of the war, on July 19, 1941, Stalin put Abakumov at the head of the department of special departments of the NKVD of the USSR - military counterintelligence.

The regulation on military counterintelligence listed the tasks of special officers: to stop espionage and attempts at sabotage, to expose sabotage, to eliminate "all kinds of anti-Soviet manifestations in the Red Army (counter-revolutionary agitation, distribution of anti-Soviet leaflets, provocative rumors)": to prevent "counter-revolutionary manifestations along all lines", "systematically clear the ranks of the army from infiltrated socially dangerous persons. It was not counterintelligence in the usual sense, but an apparatus that controls the armed forces.

In April 1943, the leader withdrew special departments from the People's Commissariat and created an independent Main Directorate of Counterintelligence Smersh. From that moment on, Commissar of State Security 3rd rank Abakumov reported directly to Stalin. On July 9, 1945, Abakumov was promoted to colonel general. In May 1946, the leader put him in charge of the entire Ministry of State Security.

It is believed that with this appointment the leader created a counterbalance to Beria. But Stalin was omnipotent and did not need counterbalances.

Lavrenty Pavlovich had already been removed from state security. As a result of the division of the unified NKVD into two people's commissariats, he got the department of internal affairs, which was mainly engaged in the use of prisoner labor in industry. And at the end of 1945, he completely ceased to be People's Commissar of Internal Affairs.

Stalin never gave one man too much power. On December 29, 1945, Stalin signed a resolution of the Politburo: "To satisfy the request of Comrade Beria to release him from the duties of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs." With his own hand, the leader added: "in view of his overload with other central work."

Beria did not ask for this at all. The decision of the Politburo was a signal that at the next turn, Lavrenty Pavlovich could follow his predecessors into oblivion. Another thing is that he sometimes played the role of a relaying authority in the relationship between Stalin and the state security.

On December 31, 1946, Deputy Prime Minister Beria told Stalin:

"I present to you reports received from Comrade Abakumov about food difficulties in some areas of the Moldavian SSR, the Izmail region of the Ukrainian SSR and excerpts from letters coming from the population of the Voronezh and Stalingrad regions with complaints about the difficult food situation and reports of cases of swelling in the soil of hunger.

These were letters intercepted by the Chekists. Reading them is scary.

Voronezh region, letters from peasants:

"From poor nutrition, the wife began to swell, he himself is very weak. The guys endure hunger patiently, if there is nothing to eat, which happens very often, they are silent, they do not torment their souls with vain requests.

"Terrible malformation. There is no way to get flour, commercial bread, there are thousands of people in line, people eat cake (pressed sunflower seeds, from which oil is squeezed out by machines). So live as you wish. It's scary to die of hunger."

"Mother is swollen from hunger, there is nothing to support her. We haven't eaten bread for two months, we eat only beetroot, and it also ends.

Arkhangelsk region, letters from the workers of the shipyard No. 402:

"Half of the locals suffer from scurvy and other diseases, and all this comes from terrible material conditions - a lack of fats and vitamins."

"At the market, absolutely nothing is allowed to be sold - they take away, and bread in particular. In general, the situation for the workers is "Akhovian". People all hung their heads and think only about their existence.

Stalin region, letters from the workers of the coal industry:

"In the morning and in the evening they give one water with rotten cucumbers, and for the second - a spoonful of fodder beetroot. Everyone is going to run."

"They feed us here like dogs: half a liter of gruel in the morning, the same for lunch and one spoonful of porridge. Balanda is boiled from flour. Earnings are very poor - 300 rubles a month, and 600 rubles are needed for food. They don't give out overalls."

A lot or a little - 300 rubles in those years? The minister's salary was eight thousand, twenty-five times more.

The leader, through Beria, gave instructions to the Chekists, until he himself took up the Lubyanka. Pushing aside other matters, Stalin is increasingly immersed in Chekist affairs.

Lieutenant General Pavel Gavrilovich Drozdetsky recalled: "From July 1946 to March 1948, I worked as the head of the fifth department of the USSR Ministry of State Security. It was then announced to us that the direct leadership of the MGB was carried out personally by I.V. Stalin and all documents of an operational nature are drawn up only in his address.

The leader got used to Abakumov during the war years.

Viktor Semenovich managed to deftly undermine the position of the former minister - Merkulov. He complained to Stalin: at meetings with the operational staff, Merkulov demands to concentrate forces on the fight against the intelligence and subversive activities of the German special services, but does not pay attention to the development of the Trotskyists!

A certificate was sent to the Central Committee, from which it followed that the 2nd Directorate, following the instructions of Minister Merkulov and his deputy Kobulov, had handed over all cases against the Trotskyists to the archive, work on the Trotskyists had been stopped, agents were being used along other lines. The leader considered this a gross political mistake. An order appeared - to raise files on the Trotskyists from the archive and restore the KGB work on them.

Merkulov not only lost the post of minister. He was transferred from the members of the Central Committee to candidates - for "hiding from the Central Committee the facts about the biggest shortcomings in the work of the ministry." This could be a harbinger of even greater trouble.

After the war, the leader was concerned about the mood of the military, who returned from the war as heroes. During the war years, one hundred and one generals and admirals were arrested. Twelve died during the investigation. Eighty-one were convicted by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court and the Special Council. The scale of arrests among the generals testifies to how many informants the military environment was permeated with. Specialists kept the entire army under suspicion and forced a huge number of people to inform on comrades and colleagues.

"We worked twelve hours a day, but there was no normal lighting. I had to read the letters by the light from the cartridge case, in which the wicks of cotton wool were lit with kerosene. It was later that mobile power plants appeared," the veteran of military counterintelligence recalled her front-line feat, to whom even today one newspaper dedicated an enthusiastic three-column.

The heroine of the essay, whose merits were solemnly noted by the current military counterintelligence officers, participated in the Great Patriotic War as a senior controller of the "military censorship" department of a special department of one of the armies.

What were her duties?

"Checking mail," explains the newspaper, "identifying information

which could reveal the location of the Soviet units, their numbers and movement.

The former censor willingly told the correspondent about her military youth: "Some disclosed secret data due to a misunderstanding, but there were also those who deliberately reported facts that were not subject to distribution. Sometimes an inner instinct for this or that letter prompted. We made reports on suspicious persons, continued to monitor the correspondence, and the relevant authorities took them "for development".

Only a naive reader can assume that the courageous girl was catching enemy spies. The agents that the Germans managed to transfer across the front line knew exactly what not to write. And counterintelligence caught them not on letters. So who fell under the suspicion of the censors?

In the Great Patriotic War, soldiers and commanders of the Red Army, for obvious and obvious reasons, were forbidden to report their location, type of troops, information about weapons, and indeed everything that related to military life ... But this or that fighter was eager to tell relatives or friends exactly where he is serving, what weapons he has and in general, how the fighting is going on, which of course everyone was interested in.

This kind of data in all warring countries was simply blotted out from letters by censors. How were the Soviet censors different? They intercepted letters from soldiers with reports of the death of their comrades, bitter stories about poor nutrition, lice and the hard life in the trenches. For example, parts of the Kalinin Front in 1943 suffered from massive beriberi. The soldiers were placed in medical battalions with a diagnosis of exhaustion. The front quartermasters were to blame, who, deftly manipulating in their favor, instead of meat gave out egg powder, instead of potatoes and vegetables - millet and almost ruined the front.

"We slept on bunk beds in dugouts flooded with water," one future Moscow official recalled front-line life. - They fed - a burda without a drop of salt and a ration of bread ... At night, cake was brought in to feed the horses. The soldiers found out about it. The cake was immediately spread across dugouts and eaten.

In the morning formation, the regimental commander yelled:

- Are you people? You are animals! The animals were left without food.

And that the hungry young soldiers ate this cake, the "humanist" commander did not even think about this. Who was to blame for all this, we did not know then. Maybe rogue quartermasters who stole without a twinge of conscience, in accordance with the fact that from day to day we were to be sent to the front, and there, you see, the war will write everything off.

The censors passed messages of this kind to the operatives of special departments. The author of the frank letter was taken into active development, that is, they were being prepared for arrest for anti-Soviet activities. As needed, they built a case, and a fighter, unrestrained in his language, was turned into a "spy" or "saboteur".

Censorship also checked letters addressed to servicemen. It was already purely political control, a security check. What military secrets will the soldier's wife give out in a letter from the village? Messages were intercepted that dealt with food shortages, natural disasters, accidents, crop failures, in general, about poverty and squalor of life, especially collective farm life. Religious statements were considered unacceptable.

And sad letters were often written from home. During the war years, judging by the notes of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Beria in the Politburo, they were starving in the Sverdlovsk region, in Chuvashia, Tataria, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, the Kabardian and Buryat-Mongolian autonomous republics ... People gathered sprouted grain in the fields, the use of which led to death. In the villages of the Kirov region, they ate tree bark.

In April 1943, Beria's deputy commissar of state security of the 2nd rank

Bogdan Kobulov reported to the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars on the situation in the Vologda Oblast:

"Centralized flour funds have been reduced, as a result of which a significant number of families of Red Army soldiers connected with agriculture, including forty thousand children, have been removed from the supply of bread ... In a number of districts of the Vologda Oblast they have

place numerous facts of eating surrogates (chaff, clover tops, straw, moss) and the corpses of dead animals.

Seditious letters did not reach the addressee. The censor had scissors, glue and two envelopes at his disposal. One says "For the removal of text", the other - "For operational use."

Of course, the censor himself lived in fear, because he, too, was being tested. Coming to work, he received a stamp "Checked by military censorship" with a personal number, which allowed the Chekists, if necessary, to establish who missed this or that letter. From time to time the Chekists planted a letter with anti-Soviet statements. If the censor let him through, severe punishment followed, and therefore they worked with special zeal. But the main thing was something else.

"Remembering those days, and much later reading documents in the KGB archive," wrote literary critic Irma Kudrova, "I noted a remarkable feature of the employees of this department. In these people, the "organs" purposefully cultivate suspicion. They were also inspired with confidence: the enemies of the authorities are everywhere, anyone can turn out to be one. And, looking through the strongest magnifying glass, the employee inflates every sprout of "rebellion" that he encounters. Any protest, any disagreement with the existing order is a dangerous crime.

The psyche and psychology of the Chekist deserve professional study, the paths of their conclusions are clearly at odds with the norm, now I am convinced of this. The Chekist is just a serviceable cog in a machine consciously programmed to remove people who dare to be independent from society.

And nowhere to find salvation! Even the soldiers at the front, who defended the Fatherland, were not guaranteed from persecution. Alexander Isaevich Solzhenitsyn, a combat artillery officer, battery commander, order bearer, was arrested in February 1945 (when the war was already ending!) For correspondence with a friend.

A vigilant censor drew attention to his letters. Captain Solzhenitsyn did not violate the laws of war. Did not give out army or service secrets. And he was not even an anti-Soviet at all, which he would later become, after going through the Gulag. The letters were rather philosophical in nature. Solzhenitsyn, who fought for his homeland, at that time believed in socialism and shared his sincere thoughts on how to make life in the country better.

What alarmed the censor?

As the heroine of the essay put it, "an inner instinct prompted." Not the law, mind you. Flair! Another former censor recalled the same thing: "It was necessary to sniff out letters with a dog's scent, representing, as we put it, operational interest."

The censor's "flair" did not disappoint! Or should I say "sniff"? Solzhenitsyn's letters were intercepted and handed over to Smersh officers, who actually had to fight against the Germans, and not against their own ... Specialists, sparing no time and effort, spent several months building a case against the artillery captain, who was just at war with the enemy, and the future classic Russian literature went to the camp. Military merit meant nothing.

After the war, the Soviet Union became part of the big world. Millions of Soviet citizens in military uniform ended up on the territory of other European countries. Comparison in living standards was not in favor of the Soviet system, and this could be disastrous. Moreover, the demobilized soldiers and officers believed that everything would go well after the victory.

otherwise.

And Stalin seemed to be trying to make people forget about the war. Canceled Victory Day. He forbade writing and publishing memoirs. In January 1948, he abolished monetary rewards and, in general, any benefits awarded to those awarded orders and medals. In Leningrad, he closed the Blockade Museum. He forbade erecting monuments related to the blockade. The tragedy and glory of Leningrad, noted one foreign journalist who worked in Russia for many years, sticks out like a bone in the throat of Moscow and party leaders ...

"It was necessary to remove those soldiers, those freethinkers who saw with their own eyes,

that the vanquished live unlike the winners, - recalled the front-line writer Viktor Petrovich Astafyev, - that there, under capitalism, life is much healthier and richer. So Comrade Stalin began to destroy those who saved his skin.

The leader decided first of all to rein in the military. And who better than military counterintelligence will be able to deal with them?

In the state security apparatus, they breathlessly said that Colonel-General Abakumov was so close to Stalin that he even sews tunics from the same material as him. At the beginning of 1951, there was talk along the corridors of the Lubyanka that Abakumov was going for a big promotion - to the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

When the head of the 5th department of the MGB, Colonel Alexander Petrovich Volkov, reported to the minister about the security system for Stalin during his return from the south, Abakumov shared his joy with his subordinate: by special decision, only he and Beria were entrusted to meet the leader in Moscow. None of the leaders of the party and government are ordered to appear at the station.

The minister ceased to reckon with the members of the Politburo. They kept quiet, waiting for the moment when it would be possible to get even with him. Even Beria, according to Merkulov, "was mortally afraid of Abakumov and tried to maintain good relations with him at all costs."

Other Chekists were also afraid of him. Abakumov set his sights on Beria's closest associate, Bogdan Kobulov, who was removed from the NKGB in 1945. This story was told by the head of department "A" of the MGB, Major General Arkady Yakovlevich Gertsosky.

Before the war, Gertsosky served as deputy head of the 1st special department of the NKVD. The head was Georgy Alexandrovich Petrov, a recent assistant to Kobulov. At the end of November 1939, on Saturday, at four o'clock in the morning, having completed their work, they went home. Literally an hour later, Gertsosky received a call from the department duty officer: Petrov had died. The attending physician has diagnosed: rupture of heart.

Beria ordered an investigation. The head of the counterintelligence department, Pavel Vasilievich Fedotov, was present at the autopsy. Conducted an examination. It was concluded that death was due to natural causes. However, Petrov's attending physician was arrested and shot. Fedotov handed over materials about the death of Petrov to the archive in 1947, when he left for the Committee of Information (foreign intelligence). A year later, Abakumov ordered Gertsosky to bring the archival file. He said that Petrov did not die himself, but Kobulov killed him. But Viktor Semenovich did not have time to get to Bogdan Zakharovich.

The Minister of State Security has ceased to catch the plans of the leader. Not very literate (four grades of education) and not too insightful, he turned out to be too simple for the ingenious combinations that were constantly born in the head of the leader. He did not guess Stalin's far-reaching plans, and the leader did not give direct instructions.

Stalin preferred to drop hints, believing that his subordinates caught on the fly his every word. Lev Romanovich Sheinin, who for many years headed the investigation department of the allied prosecutor's office, was once asked: how exactly did Stalin give instructions - who to plant, who to shoot?

"Comrade Stalin is not a godfather, but the head of state," Sheinin explained. - He is obliged were to understand. And those who did not understand themselves quickly disappeared.

The fate of Viktor Abakumov was decided on the night of July 5, 1951 in Stalin's Kremlin office. At half past one in the morning, Molotov, Bulganin, Beria and Malenkov came to see the leader. In their circle they talked for half an hour. Exactly at one in the morning, Colonel-General Abakumov, who was waiting in the reception room of the Minister of State Security, was called. And after another forty minutes, the threshold of Stalin's office, trembling with fear, stepped over one of Abakumov's subordinates - an employee of the MTB in the modest rank of lieutenant colonel.

On the table lay a letter addressed to Stalin, signed by this lieutenant colonel.

"I consider it my duty," Lieutenant Colonel Ryumin wrote, "to inform you that Comrade. Abakumov, according to my observations, has a tendency to deceive government agencies by hushing up serious shortcomings in the work of the MGB agencies ... Comrade. Abakumov not

he always strengthened his position in the state apparatus in honest ways, and he is a dangerous person for the state, especially in such a sensitive area as the Ministry of State Security."

Stalin, like a real investigator, arranged a kind of confrontation between Ryumin and Abakumov. The Minister angrily denied all accusations. But the leader did not accept excuses. Pointing to the lieutenant colonel, whom he saw for the first time, he said:

- Here, a simple person, but how deeply he understands the tasks of state security agencies. And the minister is not able to understand.

Lieutenant Colonel Ryumin, senior investigator of the investigative unit for especially important cases of the MGB, acquired the traits of a demonic personality in literature. How! It was he who brought down the all-powerful Minister of State Security, Viktor Abakumov himself, whom everyone was afraid of.

In July 1941, the financier of the Khimki river port, Mikhail Dmitrievich Ryumin, an accountant by profession, on the recommendation of the district committee, was sent by the military registration and enlistment office to serve in the state security agencies. He was assigned to short-term courses for employees of special departments at the Higher School of the NKVD. After the theoretical course, the cadets were sent to a military training ground in the Moscow region for a two-week combat run-in. Shooting training, bayonet fighting, throwing grenades, forced marches and orienteering.

At the end of September, forty-first ten cadets of the Higher School were summoned to the personnel department and informed that their studies were over. The newly minted special officers were given a leave of absence until nine in the evening - to say goodbye to their relatives, and the next day they were sent to the disposal of the special department of the Karelian Front.

But Ryumin did not get to the front.

"One of our cadets, Mikhail Ryumin, feigning an illness, stayed for "treatment" in the city of Arkhangelsk and achieved admission to the service as an investigator of the special department of the Arkhangelsk military district," recalled Colonel of State Security Ivan Yakovlevich Leonov, who studied with him, "and served there throughout the war".

Ryumin rose in Arkhangelsk to the head of the investigative department of the counterintelligence department of Smersh district; he was noticed and taken to Moscow, to the central office as a senior investigator. After the disbandment of the head office with other military counterintelligence officers, they were transferred to the Ministry of State Security. His service went without any special achievements, until he accused his minister of deliberately hiding the crimes of doctors who were ruining Soviet leaders.

How did he dare to oppose the all-powerful minister?

It is generally accepted that Ryumin's stigma was in a cannon. Researchers write that his parents were kulaks, that his father-in-law served in the army of Admiral Kolchak during the Civil War. State Security Minister Ignatiev said that Ryumin left a briefcase with an investigation file on the bus and he was reprimanded for this. But there is not a word about this in the documents in the Ryumin case. He got into serious trouble for a different reason. He violated the minister's order on the course of the investigation, and his defendant died. The Party Bureau issued a reprimand to Ryumin, which could be followed by dismissal.

And he went for broke. He complained about the minister to the Central Committee.

A year earlier, the lieutenant colonel would have been dismissed, and even sent a letter to Abakumov himself, so that he would deal with the complaining subordinate. Now Ryumin seemed to be expected. Malenkov's assistant, the second person in the party, Dmitry Nikolaevich Sukhanov, worked with him.

Malenkov defiantly limited his apparatus to one assistant. Sukhanov was overloaded to the limit with various organizational issues, but he solved them, his colleagues recalled, "with enviable efficiency." This created Malenkov's reputation as the most dynamic secretary of the Central Committee. Ryumin revised his denunciation several times in Malenkov's waiting room, until Georgy Maximilianovich approved the text.

Lieutenant Colonel Ryumin's letter was placed on Stalin's table on July 2. He read and was pleased. Colonel-General Abakumov covered up killer doctors - he deeply penetrated

CONSPIRACY! This is how Stalin put the question. Ryumin's letter gave him the opportunity to connect two conspiracies - among doctors and within the Ministry of State Security. Killer doctors are especially dangerous, Stalin formulated, because there is no one to resist the enemies. Traitors wound up among the Chekists.

A day later, the leader put an end to the brilliant career of Viktor Abakumov. July 4, 1951 he was removed from business. The short text of the Politburo resolution Georgy Malenkov, dictated by the leader, wrote by hand: Ryumin, and report on the results of the Politburo. The term of the commission is three to four days.

When the reprinted text of the resolution was brought from the machine bureau, another name was added to the commission - Semyon Denisovich Ignatiev. He was in charge of the department of party, trade union and Komsomol personnel of the Central Committee of the party, that is, he was in charge of the entire nomenclature. On July 11, Stalin will appoint him "representative of the Central Committee in the Ministry of State Security", and on August 9 - the new minister.

On July 11, the Politburo adopted a resolution "On the unfavorable situation in the MGB THE USSR". The document was given the highest classification of secrecy - "special folder":

"Remove Abakumov V.S. from the work of the Minister of State Security of the USSR as a person who committed crimes against the party and the Soviet state, to be excluded from the ranks of the CPSU (b) and to transfer his case to court.

A day later, the Central Committee sent a closed letter "On the unfavorable situation in the Ministry of State Security of the USSR" to the republican, regional, regional committees of the party, as well as the republican MGB and regional departments of state security:

"Being summoned first to the Politburo, then to the commission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Abakumov embarked on the path of naked denial of the established facts that testify to the unfavorable situation in the work of the MGB, during interrogation he tried again to deceive the party, did not show understanding of the crimes he had committed and did not show any signs of readiness to repent of the crimes committed by him.

On July 12, Colonel-General Abakumov was summoned to the federal prosecutor's office and charged in full form under Article 58-1 "b" of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR - "treason against the Motherland committed by servicemen."

A year earlier, at the beginning of 1950, a special prison was created at 18 Matrosskaya Tishina Street for those arrested for political reasons. The cells could accommodate forty to fifty people. The head of the prison, Colonel Alexander Petrovich Kleimenov, was warned that he was subordinate only to the secretary of the Central Committee, Malenkov, and the head of the party control commission, Shkiryatov. Installed "turntable" -

the apparatus of the city government communications, so that investigators could directly report to Malenkov on the progress of interrogations.

Abakumov was brought here. He was brought by two employees of the prosecutor's office, the head of the Main Directorate of the Border Troops, Lieutenant-General Nikolai Pavlovich Stakhanov, and the head of the Main Directorate of State Security for Railway and Water Transport, Colonel-General Sergei Arsenievich Goglidze. They were not chosen by chance. Both Stakhanov and Goglidze will soon be promoted to deputy ministers.

- You know this person? Goglidze asked the head of the prison, pointing to Abakumov. - Accept him as an arrested person.

In prison, the former minister was listed as "prisoner number fifteen."

Before his arrest, he lived in house number 11 on Kolpachny Lane. Sixteen families were evicted from here so that the minister could be accommodated comfortably. On that day, the windows of the mansion were tightly curtained. There was a search, Abakumov's recent subordinates described for a long time the property unprecedented at that time - furniture sets, refrigerators that were not yet in Moscow, thirteen radios and radiograms, thirty wristwatches, one hundred pairs of shoes, a whole suitcase of suspenders, seventy-eight vases, many cameras, silverware, fabrics...

Abakumov's first wife, Tatyana Andreevna, was also going to be arrested, but they changed their minds. They limited themselves to being expelled from a huge apartment at number eight on Telegraph Lane, lined with oak panels and furnished with antique furniture. But the second wife of Abakumov, Antonina Nikolaevna, who herself worked in the Ministry of State Security, was arrested. Two months before her arrest, Antonina gave birth to a son who was not destined to see his father. Antonina was sent to the Sretensky prison together with the child.

Following Abakumov, his subordinates went to jail. They arrested the head of the investigation unit for particularly important cases, three of his deputies, the head of the secretariat of the minister and his deputy.

Some criminals planted others.

The leader ordered to select new people for the organs. By the decision of the Bureau of the Presidium of the Central Committee of December 29, 1952, Secretary of the Central Committee Nikolai Alexandrovich Mikhailov (as a recent leader of the Komsomol) was instructed to "pick up 5-10 workers and send them to the MGB to improve the work of the investigating authorities." Mikhailov was in a hurry to fulfill the leader's instructions.

In January 1953, recent Komsomol workers were approved as assistants to the head of the investigative unit for especially important cases of the Ministry of State Security -

Vasily Nikiforovich Zaichikov and Nikolai Nikolaevich Mesyatsev.

Newcomers explained:

- Comrade Stalin looked at your personal files. He liked you.

Vasily Zaichikov, a graduate of the Moscow Institute of Transport Engineers, went along the Komsomol line from his youth. In August 1949, he was made the first secretary of the regional committee of the Komsomol in Leningrad and elected a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, in April 1952 he was transferred to Moscow - the secretary of the Komsomol Central Committee for personnel. A week after Stalin's death, he would be fired from the organs and sent to study at the Higher Party School. He will work as deputy chairman of the Novosti Press Agency, head of the APN bureau in Helsinki.

Nikolai Mesyatsev was transferred to the MGB from the post of deputy head of the department of Komsomol bodies of the Central Committee of the Komsomol. But he, unlike Zaichikov, was a military lawyer, during the war he served in the Smersh military counterintelligence department under the leadership of Abakumov, whom he really liked.

Vasily Zaichikov was assigned to conduct the case of Abakumov. He told Mesyatsev that, when the former minister was brought to him for interrogation for the first time, he immediately remarked:

"Ah, they gave me a rookie investigator.

- How did you define it? Zaichikov asked.

- You were a deputy of the Supreme Council, you still have a trace of a badge on your lapel, boots from abroad...

The new deputy head of the investigative unit for particularly important cases, Nikolai Mikhailovich Konyakhin (he was transferred to the MGB from the post of instructor in the administrative department of the Central Committee of the Party), together with Zaichikov, Minister Ignatiev and his deputy Goglidze were brought to Stalin to the "near" dacha.

Zaichikov said that he saw an old man, somewhat hunched over, with drooping shoulders. The leader was especially interested in the arrested minister Abakumov. Ordered on his account:

- Put in shackles.

Stalin was dissatisfied with the draft indictment in the Abakumov case.

The former minister was accused of "nurturing treasonous plans and, striving for supreme power in the country, put together a criminal group in the USSR Ministry of State Security." They demanded confessions from Abakumov. But he understood better than others: recognition is tantamount to death. As soon as he signs the protocol of interrogation, they will immediately report to Stalin and everything will end for him - they will shoot him. Therefore, Abakumov did not admit any charges.

Konyakhin interrogated the arrested head of the secretariat of the MGB, Colonel Ivan Aleksandrovich Chernov:

- Your Abakumov was going to seize power. Tell me, how did Abakumov plan to distribute ministerial portfolios?

And the leader was angry with the investigators from the Lubyanka, demanded that Abakumov and other arrested Chekists be beaten with mortal combat. The new Minister of State Security, Semyon Ignatiev, was in a hurry to fulfill the leader's instructions. He sent Stalin a handwritten note:

"Abakumov was transferred from Lefortovo to Butyrka prison and is kept in hand shackles. The location of the cell in which Abakumov is kept excludes the possibility of his connection with any of the persons who are not related to his protection and interrogations.

Abakumov is guarded by people who do not know him and are unknown to him. It is contained not under the surname, but under the number assigned to it. Two employees have been selected and have already been used in the case, who can perform special tasks (apply physical punishment) in relation to especially important and especially dangerous criminals.

A group of Chekists were given rubber sticks, promised vouchers to a rest home, a cash allowance and an extraordinary assignment of military ranks. They tried. During interrogations, Abakumov was so beaten that he could not walk. The conclusion of the prison doctor testifies that Abakumov (he was only forty-odd, and he had not complained about his health before) was turned into a complete invalid:

"Prisoner number fifteen can hardly stand on his feet, moves with outside help, complains of pain in his heart, weakness, dizziness. For health reasons, he needs to be transferred from the punishment cell to a cell."

The recent minister was kept in a refrigerated punishment cell. Starved. April 1952 Abakumov asked for paper and a pencil. Wrote a letter to Beria and Malenkov:

"On the night of March 16, they seized me and brought me to the so-called punishment cell, but in fact, as it turned out later, it was a refrigerating chamber with a pipeline installation, without windows, completely empty, two meters in size.

In this monster, without air, without food (they gave me a piece of bread and two mugs of water a day), I spent eight days. The installation turned on, the cold intensified all the time. I fell into unconsciousness many times. I have never seen such atrocity and I did not know about the presence of such refrigerators in Lefortovo - I was deceived. This stone bag can give death, injury and a terrible disease.

On March 23, it almost ended in death - they miraculously left me and put me in the medical unit, injecting heart preparations and putting rubber bladders with hot water under my feet.

Sitting in a prison cell, Abakumov did not think that he repeated the fate of millions of people who were imprisoned for what they did not commit. Others were planted correctly. He was treated unfairly! The ill-wishers set the leader against him. Abakumov hoped that Stalin would stop being angry with him.

In his own way, he asked Beria and Malenkov:

"First. Finish everything and get me back to work, I need treatment.

Second. If this story continues for some time, then take me away from Lefortovo and get rid of Ryumin and his friends. Maybe we should return him to Matrosskaya Tishina and let the prosecutors interrogate him.

Maybe you can bring your wife and child home, I will always be grateful to you for that. She is a very honest and good person."

In a sense, the former Minister of State Security turned out to be a surprisingly naive person. I had no doubt that he would come out of the dungeons. For some reason I believed that Beria and Malenkov put in a word for him:

"More than a year has passed, and I am still constantly interrogated. All this time I was asked a large number of questions - strange, absurd and simply provocative ... Maybe it would be better to finish this story before the departure of comrade.

Stalin on vacation? I say this because sometimes during the holidays some issues were resolved more acutely. Understand my position and therefore excuse me for this advice.

Once again I ask you for a wife and a child. Bring them home. Wife is in poor health the baby needs air. Otherwise, you can ruin both her and my dear, only son.

Please help me with this."

In response, the new minister, Ignatiev, was instructed to further tighten the regime for the detention of the arrested. Abakumov was transferred to the Butyrka prison. The prisoners were removed from the adjacent cells.

"There is a round-the-clock post from among the most trusted guards at the door of the cell. They are warned that arrested number fifteen is capable of any provocation and may resort to suicide.

According to the minister's instructions, the arrested number fifteen is handcuffed, which will be removed only during meals. For the rest of the time, arrested number fifteen will sit in handcuffs, and in the daytime with his hands behind his back, and at night with his hands on his stomach.

They did with the former minister what he did with others while he was the owner of the Lubyanka. When he was arrested, he confidently said during interrogation:

- We can beat the arrested. In the Central Committee, my first deputy Ogoltsov and I were repeatedly warned that our Chekist apparatus should not be afraid to use physical measures against spies and other state criminals when necessary.

The former director of an aircraft factory, who survived, told what they did to him at Lubyanka. Abakumov came for interrogation and ordered the deputy head of the investigative unit for especially important cases, Colonel Vladimir Ivanovich Komarov:

"Take two more healthy investigators, beat him with two clubs and make him talk!"

"A baton was shown. Komarov explained in detail and tastefully how it is operated, what consequences people who have tried it have for life ... I refused to testify. Komarov forced me to stand up, hit me twice in the face, knocked out two teeth, and then, together with Rassypinsky, dragged me to a chair and beat me with a rubber truncheon. At the next interrogation, they laid me on the floor, took off my low shoes and beat me with the same club on the soles and heels. There were seven such interrogations in total. After the seventh interrogation, I could not stand it and said that I was ready to testify."

Colonel Komarov, a locksmith by profession, had seven years of education. When they put him in jail, he will honestly tell:

- Abakumov often told me: "You are an oak tree." His reproaches were justified, since writing the testimonies of the arrested was a weak point in our country due to general illiteracy.

Lieutenant colonel Anatoly Filippovich Rassypinsky, a graduate of an agricultural technical school, served as a senior investigator, assistant to the head of the investigative unit for especially important cases, then served in the 6th department (combating Jewish nationalism) of the 5th (secret-political) department of the MTB.

Why in the Stalin years, the accused confessed to the most incredible crimes? Testimony was literally knocked out, and people could not stand the torture.

At the trial of the former head of the Main Directorate of Military Counterintelligence Smersh and the Minister of State Security Viktor Abakumov in December 1954, the Prosecutor General of the USSR Roman Andreevich Rudenko said:

- I do not want to decipher some forms of torture in order not to humiliate the dignity of those persons to whom they were applied, who remained alive and are present at the trial.

Rudenko, writes Vladimir Ivanovich Terebilov, former chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR, "probably had in mind cases where, for example, the interrogated person was undressed and

put on the leg of an overturned stool so that it got into the rectum.

Following the arrest of Abakumov, Stalin staged a major purge in the Lubyanka. Chekists expelled and imprisoned. In a narrow circle, Stalin said:

"The more successes we have, the more enemies will try to harm. Our people forgot about this, complacency, arrogance, arrogance appeared ... Unfavorable in state security, vigilance has dulled. They themselves admitted that they were sitting in manure, in a hole. Sloth, decay deeply touched the MGB. It is necessary to treat state security.

One of Abakumov's subordinates could not stand it and gave the necessary testimony to the investigation: a terrorist group inside the MGB under the leadership of Abakumov was preparing an attempt on Malenkov. The KGB conspirators acted under the leadership of the American ambassador in Moscow, Averell Harriman... Stalin approved the indictment in the Abakumov case, but was in no hurry to shoot him.

The system of the Ministry of the Interior, to which the camps were subordinate, was preparing to receive new prisoners. They were supposed to be useful, so the new camps were placed taking into account the needs of one or another industrial department.

April 30, 1951 Minister of the Interior Sergei Nikiforovich Kruglov signed order "On the organization of special camp No. 10":

"1. Organize on the territory of the Kemerovo region for the construction of mines of the Tom Usinsk deposit of the Kemerovo coal basin - a special camp No. 10 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for 25,000 prisoners.

2. Assign the name "Kamyshev" to the special camp.

In the autumn of 1951, Stalin went to rest on Lake Ritsa, where a new dacha was built for him. The leader took a long vacation - five months. But already in mid-October he summoned the new Minister of State Security, Semyon Denisovich Ignatiev.

The choice seemed strange. Ignatiev is an official. Before moving to the Lubyanka, he was in charge of the department of party, trade union and Komsomol personnel in the Central Committee, that is, he was the chief personnel officer. But Stalin needed a man from the outside. He deliberately appointed a foreign apparatchik to the Chekists as minister. He asked how the state security apparatus works. Ignatiev rather cheerfully replied that after the arrest of Abakumov, there was some confusion, but "now the Chekists have pulled themselves up, they work better."

Stalin reproached the new minister:

- You are a blind person, you do not see what is happening around you.

And he showed Ignatiev a new letter from Ryumin, listing those leaders of the MGB, who belongs to the Abakumov group and works dishonestly. Stalin ordered:

- Ryumin should be appointed deputy minister.

The leader was terribly dissatisfied with the Chekists, calling them "loafers." Ordered Ignatiev to purge the Lubyanka:

"I'm not saying you kick them out into the street. Plant. And let them sit...

Behind bars were the top leaders of the state security agencies. True, one of the deputy ministers, Lieutenant General Nikolai Nikolaevich Selivanovskiy, had to be handed over to psychiatrists. He was diagnosed with a "protracted reactive state in the form of mental paranoid." They imprisoned, however, not only for political reasons, but also for economic omissions and pure criminality. For example, those who were not in rank were dragging trophy property from Germany in wagons.

None of the departments knew such a large-scale purge. During the year, from July 1, 1951 to July 1, 1952, 1,583 Chekists were expelled "for not doing their job". Another three thousand were fired for various violations. In September 1952, the state security apparatus was reduced by more than thirty thousand people! But all the same, Stalin demanded to remove people "unworthy of working in the Cheka."

The Chekists were required to study in depth the leader's works and party documents so that they would understand the demands of the party. For this, a special time was allocated on weekdays. Here is the order of the head of one of the regional departments of state security:

"Establish the following working hours for UMGB personnel:

daytime work from 10.00 to 17.00 evening work from 20.00 to 24.00.

Time for mass-political work - lectures, reports, talks and other events to allocate on Mondays from 9.00 to 11.00.

In connection with the introduction of this daily routine, the employees of the UMGB should pay attention to the need for all-round compaction of working hours, avoidance of lateness, premature departures from work and waste of time that are not related to the performance of official duties. The use of working time for visiting the canteen and for other personal needs of employees is prohibited.

Explain to all employees of the UMGB that the new daily routine provides an opportunity and should be used to improve independent work on Marxist-Leninist education.

At the direction of the leader, Ignatiev hired two dozen secretaries of regional committees, who received high military ranks and headed key units in the MGB apparatus. Material conditions for them were preserved - not lower than that of the secretary of the regional committee, they were all provided with apartments in Moscow.

Ignatiev gathered the leadership of the ministry and made a report "On the status of the work of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR and the immediate tasks." He spoke for almost two hours. It was a complete demolition of Chekist work.

"Indiscriminately, in sharp, sometimes absurd, biting terms, an assessment was made of the activities of all the leading departments and departments of the ministry," Colonel Leonov, a participant in the meeting, recalled with resentment. "Their activities have been frowned upon. Some of these ridiculous assessments of the report remained in my memory for the rest of my life. Assessing the activities of the second main department - leading to the MGB and headed by Deputy Minister Pitovranov - it was said that it deals with trifles, "shoots sparrows from cannons, while kites fly in the air." We left the operational meeting in a depressed mood."

Over the years, a kind of caste has formed in Lubyanka, accustomed to its position, and personnel workers were immensely offended by the new minister. They did not know that Ignatiev was fulfilling the will of the leader, who wished to shake up the KGB apparatus from top to bottom.

Stalin ordered the arrest of another deputy minister, criticized by Ignatiev, General Yevgeny Petrovich Pitovranov, and with him another group of major Chekists. Although until recently I was thinking whether to put Pitovranov at the head of the ministry ... Philosophically remarked:

- The Chekist has only two ways - to be promoted or to prison.

He scolded the Lubyanka apparatus:

- Hippopotamuses... They got fat... They forgot how to work...

In the fall of 1952, for the first time since the war, Stalin did not go on vacation in the fall. He ordered to build a greenhouse at the "near" dacha for growing lemons that do not ripen in conditions of central Russia. He did not leave Moscow even in the ever-memorable thirty-seventh ... So, was the country on the verge of a new Great Terror?

It looks like he was preparing for the third world war. And he wanted to expose and neutralize the "internal enemies" in advance. For this, a team of security officers was needed, eager to prove their devotion and zeal.

The resolution of the Central Committee of July 11, 1951, which put an end to Abakumov's career, required the new minister to uncover "an enemy group existing among doctors, carrying out wrecking work against the leaders of the party and government."

Stalin admonished him:

- So you, Comrade Ignatiev, reported after checking the work of the MGB about the likelihood of the existence of a terrorist group among doctors. Now you have the cards in hand.

We hope that you will reveal this terrorist group.

Ignatiev demanded that his subordinates raise the affairs of all agents recruited among doctors. No traces of such a group were found. In October, the leader, who was resting in the south, asked:

- How is the work on the opening of the enemy group among doctors going?

The minister could do nothing to please Stalin. He burst into an angry tirade:

"Chekists don't see a damn thing beyond their noses. They are reborn as commoners. They do not want to honestly carry out the directives of the Central Committee.

Ignatiev called his deputies. We agreed to form a brigade of operatives and investigators as part of the 2nd Main Directorate of the MGB, who were instructed to carry out the leader's instructions at all costs. The brigade began to check the personnel of the Kremlin Medical and Sanitary Directorate and found it "clogged" with anti-Soviet elements.

Arrests of doctors who treated party leaders began.

The first - back under Abakumov, on November 18, 1950 - was one of the most prominent cardiologists, Professor Yakov Gilarievich Etinger. He graduated from the Natural Mathematics Faculty of the University of Königsberg and the Medical Faculty of the University of Berlin. During the First World War he served in a military hospital. He headed the department of the 2nd Medical Institute, advised the Medical and Sanitary Directorate of the Kremlin and the Central Polyclinic of the Ministry of State Security, and saved the lives of many of his patients.

But this did not matter when the state security took him in the summer of 1948. Rare eavesdropping equipment was installed in the professor's apartment, and for two years they recorded his frank conversations with his son on political topics - about Stalin, about flourishing anti-Semitism.

His son, Yakov Yakovlevich Etinger, a student at the Faculty of History of Moscow State University, was also arrested. During the war in German-occupied Minsk, the younger Etinger was sent to the ghetto. The Nazis intended to destroy him, like the rest of the Jewish population. He miraculously survived. To please the Soviet camp. The younger Etinger will receive ten years in a special camp (that is, under especially harsh conditions), his wife too they will put ...

At the very first interrogation, investigator Ryumin charged senior Etinger with "wrecking treatment" of the country's leaders, in the first place, Alexander Sergeevich Shcherbakov. Abakumov considered this accusation to be false. He ordered "to stop working with Etinger on sabotage treatment", and his anti-Soviet activities are enough.

The professors were beaten, not allowed to sleep. He could barely keep on his feet. One heart attack followed another. The medical department of the Lefortovo prison warned the investigator: "In the future, each subsequent attack of angina pectoris, accompanied by heart weakness, can lead to an unfavorable outcome." After one of the interrogations in March 1951, Professor Etinger died.

After the arrest of Abakumov himself, the leader was reported that "Jewish nationalist doctor Etinger admitted that during the treatment of Comrade Shcherbakov A.S. had terrorist intentions against him and practically took every measure to shorten his life. Abakumov hid Etinger's testimony from the Central Committee and thereby prevented the identification of "a conspiratorial group of doctors performing tasks of foreign agents in terrorist activities against the leaders of the party and government."

Victor Abakumov, of course, did not try to hide anything. He simply did not guess the far-reaching plans of Stalin. Now his recent subordinates have made Abakumov himself a participant in such a conspiracy.

They took the head of the Kremlin Medical and Sanatorium Department, Professor Pyotr Ivanovich Yegorov, the head of the therapeutic department of the Kremlin Hospital, Academician Vladimir Nikitovich Vinogradov, and professor-consultant Vladimir Kharitonovich Vasilenko.

During interrogations, the doctors "confessed" that they "misdiagnosed the illness of comrade A.A. Zhdanov, having hidden his myocardial infarction, was prescribed a regimen contraindicated for this disease and, as a result, they killed him.

Stalin demanded that the MTB provide evidence of the connection of "pestologists" with Western intelligence agencies. Who else could lead them? Who is the main enemy?

The Bulletin of the Bureau of Information of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks No. 69 of November 15, 1947 stated: "After the war, when American imperialism acted as a skirmisher and bulwark of reaction throughout the world, its intelligence sent its main forces to fight against the Soviet Union."

But the investigators were at an impasse. They got the hang of constructing the same type of accusations of Trotskyism or anti-Soviet propaganda. And how to connect doctors with American intelligence?

The then assistant to the head of the investigative unit for especially important cases of the Ministry of State Security, Nikolai Mesyatsev (the future chairman of the USSR State Radio and Television), told how his colleagues worked:

- The investigator took a medical history, for example, the chairman of the party control commission Andreev. Well, which of the investigators is a specialist in the field of the ear, throat, nose? Andreev, who had a severe earache, was given a small dose of opium to alleviate the pain. So the investigator attributed to the attending physician that he accustomed a member of the Politburo to opium and thereby drove him to madness.

Stalin was dissatisfied with the ineptitude of the investigators. To Ignatieff's surprise, he cursed angrily:

"I am not a petitioner to the MGB. I can demand and punch you in the face if you don't comply with my demands... We will disperse you like sheep... If you don't open up terrorists, American agents among doctors, you will be in the same place as Abakumov..."

In August 1952, Ryumin came to Ignatiev. He unearthed the story with Timashuk. Timashuk's letter was taken from the archive. She was invited to the investigation unit for especially important cases of the Ministry of State Security and asked to describe in detail the circumstances of Zhdanov's death.

At the end of August, Stalin summoned Ignatiev to the "near" dacha. The leader was in a bad mood:

- Chekists forgot how to work, got fat, lost and forgot the traditions of the Cheka times Dzerzhinsky. The Chekists have broken away from the Party, they want to rise above the Party...

But on that day, Ignatiev had something to please Stalin. He liked the story with Timashuk. Here it is, the real story of the murder of a member of the Politburo by criminal doctors! I asked who took the initiative.

"Ryumin and his workers," the minister replied.

"I keep saying that Ryumin is an honest man and a communist," the leader enthused. – He helped the Central Committee to reveal serious crimes in the MTB. But he, poor fellow, does not find support among you, and this is because I appointed him despite your objection. Ryumin is a good fellow, and I demand that you listen to him and bring him closer. Keep in mind - I don't really trust old MTB workers.

"Treatment of comrade. Shcherbakov," Ignatiev reported, "was deliberately criminal... The treatment of Comrade Zhdanov was also criminal... The enemy group operating in the Kremlin's Lechsanupra sought to shorten their lives while treating the leaders of the party and government."

Soon Timashuk will experience a moment of happiness. On January 20, 1953, Secretary of the Central Committee Georgy Malenkov would invite her to the Kremlin and, on behalf of Comrade Stalin and the Soviet government, would thank her for her vigilance. The next day, the newspapers will publish a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: "For the assistance rendered to the Government in exposing the killer doctors, award the doctor Timashuk Lydia Feodosyevna with the Order of Lenin." Almost until the death of Stalin, all newspapers will write about

patriotic doctor. One day she will become the most popular person in the country.

Stalin ordered the arrest of the head of the Lechsanupra of the Kremlin, Professor Yegorov. How just took it, asked:

Did you put shackles on him?

Hearing that the professor was not in handcuffs, he burst into a vicious tirade:

- You are political blind people, not Chekists. Enemies are never treated like this you do. You don't understand a damn thing about the KGB case, and especially about the investigation.

He demanded that the arrested be beaten so that they would confess everything.

"To Egorov, Vinogradov and Vasilenko," they reported to Stalin, "measures of physical influence were applied, their interrogations were intensified, especially about connections with foreign intelligence services."

One of the investigators reported to the Central Committee: "Kogan and Vovsi showed that they were betting on the physical elimination of comrades Stalin and Malenkov. Only at the end of December 1952, at the direction of the Minister of State Security Comrade. Ignatiev, based on the instructions of the Central Committee of the CPSU, physical measures were applied to some of the arrested doctors. Tov. Ignatiev instructed the application of this measure, based on the fact that terrorist doctors could not act on their own initiative, but must necessarily be associated with foreign intelligence services.

At the most tense moment, Minister of State Security Ignatiev collapsed. This is understandable: he got into such a meat grinder that even a healthy heart would not survive. His deputy Goglidze recalled that the minister was "in an extremely depressed state" that autumn.

Stalin hoped that he would find in him a second Yezhov, who in the thirties he himself walked around the cells, interrogated the arrested and beat them. The leader appreciated just such.

On January 14, 1938 in Moscow, at the plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, "excesses" in the repressive policy were discussed. The report was read by Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov, head of the party personnel department. He criticized the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Mir-Jafar Baghirov:

- You shoot with lists, you don't even know the names ...

He quickly found an excuse:

- Enemies entrenched in the apparatus of the Azerbaijan NKVD deliberately confused the documents.

Stalin looked at him complacently. The master of the republic was reproached not for the fact that he shot whomever he wanted, but for being too lazy to draw up. Bagirov was made a member of the Central Committee. The best years of his life began.

But Ignatiev did not live up to expectations. A party functionary, a bureaucrat, he punctually conveyed the leader's instructions to his subordinates, demanded that they beat out the necessary testimony, but he himself did not leave the desk. Turned out to be weak.

Disappointed, Stalin told him directly:

- Do you want to be white? Will not work. Forgot that Lenin ordered to shoot Kaplan? Do you want to be more humane than Lenin was? And Dzerzhinsky ordered Savinkov to be thrown out the window. Dzerzhinsky had special people for this purpose - Latvians, who carried out such assignments. Dzerzhinsky is no match for you, but he did not avoid rough work, and you, like waiters, work in white gloves. If you want to be Chekists, take off your gloves. Chekist work is a muzhik's work, not a lord's work.

And added:

- You will be clean, I will fill your face.

Stalin's threats sounded ominous.

If Stalin had not died, Ignatiev could have followed the already arrested Chekists.

On November 15, 1952, the minister suffered a heart attack. Diagnosed - heart attack. Instead of Ignatiev, two generals, Ogoltsov and Goglidze, became loyal assistants to the leader. Both were appointed first deputy ministers of state security. So they did not shun the dirtiest and bloodiest work. The leader valued such workers. One day

Beria brought him compromising materials on the commandant of the inner prison in Lubyanka, Vasily Blokhin. Stalin replied:

"There is no need to imprison such people, they do the dirty work - they carry out sentences.

By shooting prisoners, Vasily Mikhailovich Blokhin was awarded the highest state awards, including the Order of Lenin, rose to the rank of general, but in 1954 he was deprived of his high rank as an executioner.

Lieutenant General Sergei Ivanovich Ogoltsov liked the leader because, while fulfilling his personal task, he himself killed two people. Not at the front, where he had never been, and not in a fight with well-armed saboteurs or bandits ... He killed the artistic director of the State Jewish Theater, People's Artist of the USSR Solomon Mikhailovich Mikhoels and theater critic Vladimir Ilyich Golubov-Potapov.

Line five

New staff - new business

Death of an artist

"Mikhoels' dreams," recalled the widow, Anastasia Pavlovna Pototskaya, "were almost always mixed with his anxieties. He often talked about dreams, believing that I would be able to solve them, and that I myself sometimes see prophetic dreams about future troubles. Over the past year, many times he was haunted by a dream that he was being torn apart by dogs.

It was all the more strange that he had adored dogs since childhood. His last dog, received by him at the Central House of Art Workers at the meeting of the new year, 1947, was a source of some boyish interest, fun and joy. And all the more strange and unsolved was his painful dream, a dream during which he tossed about so much and from which he woke up with a wild cry!

So say after that that people are not given to foresee their future ... He was destined to die a terrible, painful death. He was loved by so many people, he had so many true friends, and in the last minutes of his life there was not a single close person nearby. Only murderers are criminals in uniform.

January 14, 1948 Sergei Nikiforovich Kruglov, who replaced Beria at the post Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR, reported to Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Zhdanov:

"On January 13 at 7:10 am in the city of Minsk, on the road near the tram line under construction leading from Sverdlova Street to Grabarnaya Street, two male corpses were found lying face down.

The murdered were S.M. Mikhoels, artistic director of the State Jewish Theatre, People's Artist of the USSR, and V.I. Golubov-Potapov, a member of the Moscow organization of the Union of Soviet Writers. Traces of trucks, partially covered with snow, were found near the corpses. According to the inspection of the scene and the initial conclusion of medical experts, the death of Mikhoels and Golubov-Potapov followed as a result of a collision with a car that was traveling at an excessive speed and overtook them, following a steep slope towards Grabarnaya Street.

Steps have been taken to locate the vehicle. An investigation is underway."

Stalin divided the authorities into two competing departments - the MEB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Criminal cases went to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The investigation into the circumstances of the death of Mikhoels and Golubov-Potapov was initially taken up by the police.

"I myself personally went to the scene," recalled the then Minister of the Interior of Belarus, Lieutenant General Sergei Savvich Belchenko. - An inspection report was drawn up. On the corpses and on the snowy road, the imprints of the car's tire treads were clearly visible.

Sherlock Holmes was not required. By the end of the day the wanted car was found.

General Belchenko was informed that the car was in the garage of the Republican Ministry of State Security. The minister in Belarus was Tsanava.

Lavrenty Fomich Tsanava served with Beria since 1921. In 1922, he was expelled from the party on charges of "kidnapping the bride", and a year later he was reinstated. Following Beria, Tsanava left the state security agencies in 1933, headed the Samtrest grape department, and then became the first deputy people's commissar of agriculture in Georgia. His real name is Janjgava. It was difficult for the Moscow chiefs to pronounce it. In 1938, Beria asked him to change his surname to a simpler one. Tsanava was the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Belarus for many years. During the war he headed a special

department of the Western Front, was deputy chief of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement.

In the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus, Minister of State Security Tsanava most approached Interior Minister Belchenko in a friendly manner.

- I knew him well, - said Sergey Belchenko in his declining years, - and therefore he behavior surprised me. He was too kind to me.

Tsanava took Belchenko by the arm and took him aside:

"I know your people were in my garage. It's not a very good idea. I ask you not to take any further action against my people. The population may think ill of us. Do business, look for killers, but do not go where you are not asked.

General Belchenko himself was a security officer, Tsanava understood the hint and called Moscow to his boss, the Union Minister of the Interior, Colonel-General Kruglov.

Kruglov studied at the Institute of Red Professors, in 1937 he was taken to the apparatus of the Central Committee - responsible organizer of the department of leading party cadres of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. And a year later they were transferred to the NKVD - along with a whole group of party workers - to help the new People's Commissar Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. Beria liked Kruglov, and two months later Sergei Nikiforovich was appointed deputy people's commissar and head of the personnel department of the NKVD. After the war, in January 1946, he took the place of Beria.

Sergey Nikiforovich listened to Belchenko's report and ordered: to continue searching for criminals, but not to talk about this case. Kruglov's voice was sluggish, Belchenko remembered, and, contrary to his custom, he did not demand an immediate result. The general was even more surprised by the last words of the union minister.

- You, in general, do not dig there much, - said Kruglov and hung up.

Kruglov, one must understand, has already figured out what exactly happened in Minsk.

On February 11, 1948, the Deputy Head of the Main Police Department reported to the Deputy Union Minister of the Interior, Colonel General Ivan Aleksandrovich Serov:

"On January 12, at about 6 p.m., Mikhoels and Golubov-Potapov, after having lunch at a restaurant, went to the hotel, and the Minsk theater workers who were with them were told that they would be busy that evening, as they intended to visit some acquaintance of Golubov-Potapov - engineer Sergeyev or Sergey ...

At about 20 o'clock they left the hotel, and at 7 o'clock in the morning on January 13, their corpses were found on a temporary low-traffic road. The indicated road, despite the fact that it is located within the city, was little used by drivers, as it passed through a wasteland and seemed inconvenient. Both corpses were pressed into the snow, which had been falling since the evening of January 12 with a significant wind ...

All the collected materials gave reason to believe that Mikhoels and Golubov-Potapov, for some reason, intended to visit some other person, and this meeting was carefully encrypted from their acquaintances and others, while naming the fictitious name of engineer Sergeyev.

If the policemen were not interfered with, they would easily get to the truth. But an order was received to transfer all the materials to the 2nd Directorate of the Ministry of State Security of Belarus. "Identify the driver who hit him," they reported to General Serov, "

until it was possible."

In Moscow, the artistic director of the State Jewish Theater and the chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, Solomon Mikhoels, was buried with honors. Mikhoels was a brilliant actor and a wonderful person with a big heart, infinitely charming, open, ready to help and helped people.

"The greatest exertion of willpower," recalled his widow Anastasia Pototskaya, "Mikhoels needed to tame his own temperament and inexhaustible readiness to protect someone, to join the fight (often in the simplest street fight) - for justice, for the offended, for the "right". If somewhere there was too loud a conversation, or, even worse, a fight, it was impossible to keep Mikhoels. He rushed there with a jerk.

His death was a terrible blow to the Soviet Jews, who were sincerely proud of him. In 1946, Mikhoels received the Stalin Prize. He himself was a member of the Committee on the Stalin Prizes in the field of art and literature, a member of the artistic council of the Committee for Arts under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, a member of the presidium of the All-Russian Theater Society and the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Artists.

During the war, Solomon Mikhoels was sent to the United States. Thousands of Americans came to listen to Mikhoels. In the United States, public opinion influences politics, and the appeal of American Jews to support the Soviet people in the fight against Nazism led to an increase in military aid and eventually hastened the opening of a second front.

A few months after the assassination of Solomon Mikhoels, in the documents of the Ministry of State Security, the great artist will be called an agent of Zionism, a pathetic conspirator who wished to tear Crimea away from Russia and give it to the Americans. Mikhoels was backdated to the "Jewish conspiracy" that was being created at the Lubyanka.

But why, even before the development of the imaginary "conspiracy", the artist Mikhoels was removed on the night of January 13, 1948, and even in such a complex and sophisticated way?

Historians agree that the impetus was the reports of the American press about the state of Stalin's health. The leader was sensitive to such publications. Reading reviews of the foreign press, he lost his temper and demanded that the Chekists find out from whom the Americans were getting this information.

It is unlikely that American correspondents in Moscow found any special source of information. Contacts with foreigners were dangerous, even Soviet diplomats avoided meeting with correspondents, they went to receptions at the embassy on the orders of their superiors. On November 14, 1949, a special resolution of the Politburo was adopted: "Due to the fact that employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by the nature of their service, maintain contact with foreigners, it is considered necessary to entrust the KGB service to the MFA apparatus to the MGB."

As for Stalin's health, it was clear that the aging leader looked bad, was absent from Moscow for a long time, and received few people. Correspondents wrote about this. But for Stalin, these articles were unbearable!

He could not come to terms with the fact that his forces were cheating on him, that he was getting sick more and more often. When he wasn't feeling well, he wouldn't let anyone near him. Not only did he not need purely human sympathy, but he did not want anyone to know about his ailments. The leader's illnesses were a state secret. Everyone had to assume that he was full of energy and working.

The MGB came up with an option that would clearly suit Stalin: information about the great leader was spread by the Alliluyev family, relatives of his late wife.

The Bolsheviks Sergei Yakovlevich and Olga Evgenievna Alliluyev had been friends with Stalin since the pre-revolutionary period. They helped him when he was serving a link in Turukhansk, they gave him shelter when he arrived in Petrograd in 1917. In 1918, Stalin married the youngest daughter of the Alliluyevs, Nadezhda. To put it mildly, he did not like new relatives.

The editor-in-chief of the Khudozhestvennaya Literatura publishing house, Alexander Ivanovich Puzikov, recalled how once a middle-aged woman entered his office and introduced herself:

- I am Alliluyeva, Anna Sergeevna, sister of Nadezhda - Stalin's wife. Before the war, a book by our father, an old Bolshevik, was published, and I would like to republish it. These are memories of revolutionary work, of the party, of comrades.

The visitor sat down on a chair nearby and in her own way complained about the leader:

- They turned to him, but he did not lift a finger. Difficult man! Svetlana and I went to visit him at Lake Ritsa. We waited two days until he deigned to receive us. After all, the daughter and sister of his wife. We spent two days in a hotel. Since Nadezhda died, he has lost all interest in us.

Puzikov, realizing what a risky conversation was started, mumbled something like: Iosif Vissarionovich has a lot to do.

- He is busy, but we must not forget about his daughter. She has her own problems, her own worries, and very serious, vital ones. What kind of father is he who treats his daughter like an outsider? I understand hope. How hard it was for her to live with such a man!

The visitor stood up:

- Thank you. Please forgive me for being frank. Accumulated. Goodbye.

Anna Sergeevna Alliluyeva took up the pen herself. In 1946, her small booklet was published by the Soviet Writer Publishing House. The elder sister of the late Nadezhda described the young Stalin, who lived in their apartment in 1917. She thought she would please the leader. And missed. Stalin was extremely annoyed. For all Soviet people, he was already a god, and his sister-in-law allowed herself to describe him as a living person with not very pretty features. Pravda responded with a devastating review.

Among other things, Anna Alliluyeva was the widow of the prominent Chekist Commissar of State Security of the 1st rank, Stanislav Frantsevich Redens. Former secretary of Dzerzhinsky, he led the capital's state security. In 1938 he fell out of favor. He was sent as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs to Kazakhstan, a few months later he was arrested, accused of spying for Pan Poland, and in January 1940 he was shot.

With her book, Anna Alliluyeva reminded of herself. In 1948 she was arrested. On May 24, a special meeting of the MGB sentenced her to five years in prison. And four years later, the Special Meeting reviewed her case and increased the term to ten years. If not for the death of Stalin, she would not have been released.

Her son Vladimir Stanislavovich Alliluyev in our time will compile the genealogy of the Alliluyevs-Stalins and write the book "Chronicle of a Family". There are a lot of interesting things in the book. Only one thing is missing - sympathy for the unfortunate parents and an attempt to understand why his father was taken away from him first, and then his mother.

His father was shot when the boy was only five years old. He was thirteen when his mother was imprisoned. From his father, whom he hardly remembers, only a court case remains. But the boy retained the best memories of childhood and adolescence. Neither Stalin nor the system under which innocent people can be shot, according to the author, is not to blame for the death of his father. The system was generally wonderful: "In those years, trade worked properly, reliably, prices were falling, at one time bread was even served for free in canteens, people saw that their life was constantly improving ... The system provided people with a reliable life, the country was moving forward."

This judgment is supported by the personal experience of the author. Despite the execution of his father, the future author of the book and his family were not deprived of either the Kremlin clinic, or the so-called canteen of medical nutrition, which was usually called a feeder, or cars from the government garage - Lincolns and Mercedes, and after the war ZIS-110 ". They lived in the famous House on the embankment. The apartment is five-room, about one hundred square meters, Vladimir Alliluyev recalled with pleasure. Summer was spent on the Stalin

dacha. Vasily Stalin's adjutant arranged for him to graduate school, who explained to the rector of Moscow State University who is who. At the same time, the author is sincerely sure that "our way of life was, it seems to me, quite democratic ... Then it was really considered indecent to live better than others."

Stalin left the author without a father, but in return gave an unforgettable feeling of belonging to a higher power. If there is a hero in the book, then it is Joseph Stalin. The author does not even notice how strange this phrase sounds: "After the death of my father, after the war, my mother and I also loved to go to theaters. At the Bolshoi Theater, I remember, they sat in the Stalinist box."

Unforgettable moments when the great man himself paid attention to the future author. Seeing little Alliluyev, Stalin said to his mother:

- Well, for such a son you can make peace with you!

The father has already been shot.

"Most of all, Stalin then paid attention to us, the children, asked many questions, joked, teased. At dinner, he kept tossing pieces of biscuits and orange peels into my plate all the time. We laughed and squealed with delight."

Svetlana Alliluyeva was the first to write memories of her childhood in the Kremlin. Perhaps her literary experience to this day remains the most successful: the book was frank and serious. True, more success fell to the lot of a later book by Sergei Khrushchev -

thanks to a skillfully twisted, almost detective story. Khrushchev Jr. initiated the literature of excuses, when the children of the Kremlin undertook to defend the honor of their fathers. Andrey Malenkov in the book "About my father Georgy Malenkov" assured that Georgy Maximilianovich had nothing to do with repressions, on the contrary, he tried to stop Beria. Sergo Beria, who, after the execution of his father, had to bear his mother's surname, in the book "My father is Lavrenty Beria" proceeds from the fact that his father did nothing but save people. The desire not to notice the sins of the fathers is humanly understandable. But Vladimir Alliluyev, perhaps, was the first to undertake to protect not the murdered father, but the one who ordered him to be killed.

His mother, Anna Alliluyeva, served six years. She returned home in November 1953 year by another person, suffering severely from mental illness.

On December 10, 1947, Yevgenia Aleksandrovna Alliluyeva, the widow of Pavel Sergeevich Alliluyev, Stalin's brother-in-law, was also arrested. It was he who once gave Nadezhda Alliluyeva a pistol, from which she shot herself in 1932.

Pavel Sergeevich Alliluyev, deputy head of the armored department of the Red Army for political affairs, passed away before the war - he died of a heart attack in November 1938 in his office. His widow remarried. For some reason, Stalin believed that Evgenia had poisoned her first husband. Svetlana Stalina, who knew about her father's phobias, tried to protect her, writing to him in November 1945: "Daddy, as for Zhenya, it seems to me that such doubts arose in you only because she remarried too quickly. Well, why did it happen so - she told me something about it herself ... I will definitely tell you this when you arrive, because having such doubts in a person is very unpleasant, scary and somehow embarrassing."

Svetlana's intercession had no effect. The Alliluyevs became part of a large plan. Which, of course, they didn't suspect.

Yevgenia Alliluyeva was accused of "surrounding herself with relatives of those repressed for anti-Soviet speeches, in conversations with them she spoke hostilely about the activities carried out by the Soviet government, and spread slanderous fabrications against members of the government."

They arrested her second husband, the chief designer of the institute for the design of metallurgical plants of the Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgy, Nikolai Vladimirovich Molochnikov. He tried twice to jump out of the window. He was not allowed to die and was forced to sign the testimony necessary for the investigation:

"Alliluyeva was hostile and spread among her acquaintances

vicious slander against the head of the Soviet government. Alliluyeva slandered and viciously slandered Stalin and other members of the Politburo."

He listed Evgenia Alliluyeva's acquaintances, among them was the wife of the Deputy Minister of the Armed Forces for Logistics, General of the Army Andrei Vasilyevich Khrulev. She was immediately arrested, given ten years. The husband-general, like the rest of Stalin's henchmen, was silent.

Molochnikov named another acquaintance, Alliluyeva, whose daughter Marianna married "some worker at the American embassy in Moscow, Zaitsev." And this Zaitsev "spun around Kira." Kira Alliluyeva is the daughter of Pavel and Evgenia Alliluyev.

On February 21, 1948, Stalin was sent a protocol of interrogation of Vitaly Vasilievich Zaitsev, who worked as a driver at the US Embassy in Moscow, then was in the administrative and economic department. He signed a testimony that, "on the instructions of American intelligence," he elicited from Kira Alliluyeva information about the leader's life. And "at the insistence of the American intelligence officer - the head of the administrative and economic department of the embassy, Nicholas Hardy, having learned from Kira Alliluyeva the location of Stalin's dacha, went with him to the Zubalov area, where he showed him this dacha."

She was also arrested. Vitaly Zaitsev and Kira Alliluyeva were confronted. The arrested Alliluyeva testified: "When meeting with me in 1945-1947. Zaitsev importunately asked me about what theaters and how often Stalin visits, where Stalin still visits, where is the dacha of Stalin and his family. Zaitsev did not hide his criminal intent from me and directly told me that he was passing on the information he received from me about Stalin and his family to the Americans.

And how did the information from the Alliluyevs get abroad? And this question was answered. Through the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, created during the war years, which played a significant role in mobilizing world public opinion against Nazi Germany and which, by decision of the Central Committee, supplied the world press with articles about life in the Soviet Union. Stalin himself formulated the accusation: it is "the center of anti-Soviet propaganda and supplies anti-Soviet information to foreign intelligence agents."

Chekists have long been looking for people associated with American and British intelligence, in leader's immediate surroundings. And now things were moving very quickly.

Less than a week later, on December 16, 1947, from the arrested Yevgenia Alliluyeva, they knocked out the testimony the Chekists needed. She "confessed" that Isaac Iosifovich Goldstein, a senior researcher at the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science and author of the monograph "German Imperialism", asked her about the leader's life.

Stalin explained to the Chekists:

– Goldstein was interested in the personal life of the head of the Soviet government not on his own initiative, behind his back is foreign intelligence.

On December 19, Goldstein was arrested. The task of the MGB investigators was to The prisoner confessed to everything.

"I was called to the ministry by phone and told that I had to "unwind his espionage connections and reveal his spy face," Colonel Georgy Alexandrovich Sorokin, an MGB investigator, later said. - I did not receive any materials exposing Goldstein in espionage activities and even in general any case against Goldstein, and, as it became clear to me later, there was no such case at all in the MGB. Komarov, the deputy head of the investigative unit for especially important cases, appeared for interrogation and said that he had an order from Minister Abakumov to apply physical measures to Goldstein.

And both investigators took up the doctor of sciences.

"They began to beat me severely and for a long time with a rubber truncheon," Goldstein described his suffering. "I was beaten eight times in total. Exhausted by day and night interrogations, beatings, threats, I fell into deep despair and began to slander myself and others.

He was beaten until he signed a statement that he questioned Alliluyeva "by

assignment" by Zakhar Grigorievich Grinberg, senior researcher at the Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences. And Grinberg simultaneously led the historical commission of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Here is the criminal chain!

Goldstein continued to be beaten, and he signed another protocol - "about the espionage activities of Mikhoels and that he showed an increased interest in the personal life of the head of the Soviet government in the Kremlin, which American Jews were interested in."

Zakhar Grinberg was also arrested. After the revolution, he was a member of the board of the People's Commissariat of Education - together with Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunacharsky and Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya. He was beaten so much that he died in his cell. Evgenia Alliluyeva was given ten children. Colonel Komarov after the death of Stalin, at the end of 1954, will be shot ...

On December 27, 1947, Minister of State Security Viktor Abakumov and his first deputy Sergei Ogoltsov were summoned to see Stalin.

"During the conversation," Ogoltsov later said, "Comrade Stalin named the name of Mikhoels, and at the end of the conversation they instructed Abakumov about the need to hold a special event in relation to Mikhoels, and that for this purpose to arrange a "car accident".

The direct management of the operation was entrusted to Ogoltsov.

No documents were drawn up, as it should be in such cases.

Sergei Ivanovich Ogoltsov graduated from a two-year school and worked as a letter carrier before the revolution. After the revolution, he became an investigator for the county Cheka in the Ryazan province. Then he ended up in the Poltava Cheka, where he was in charge of the search bureau. In 1923 he was transferred to the system of special departments in the army, and he studied for a year at the Higher Border School of the OGPU.

In 1939, Major of State Security Ogoltsov headed the Leningrad department of the NKVD. He distinguished himself in besieged Leningrad: he came up with an imaginary counter-revolutionary organization "Committee of Public Salvation", which was preparing to "restore the capitalist system with the help of the German occupiers." Thirty-two scientists were sentenced to death in this case. Five scientists (two of them were corresponding members of the USSR Academy of Sciences) were shot, and two dozen more were imprisoned. Then he served as head of department in Kuibyshev, People's Commissar of State Security in Kazakhstan.

In December 1945, Ogoltsov was summoned to Moscow to attend a meeting of the Politburo, at which Stalin appointed Abakumov as People's Commissar of State Security. Sergei Ivanovich became his first deputy. The family was happy. Access to hitherto unprecedented material wealth has opened up.

"Materially, we lived quite well," recalls the son of General Nikolai Kuzmich Bogdanov, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, "but when we visited the Ogoltsovs, it seemed to me that we were just poor people - such was the atmosphere and food. In my opinion, it was Raisa Sergeevna Ogoltsova who was the main ringleader when traveling to special bases and shops in order to purchase the necessary things.

Having sent the leading husbands to work, the wives called each other and agreed on a trip. Then they turned to their husbands with a request to send a car. On the cars of executives there were government horns, which were two elongated chrome pipes mounted on the front bumper in front of the radiator. They made a low trumpet sound. As soon as they saw a car with horns, the police inspectors immediately turned on the green light, and if a sound signal was given, they generally went crazy, ensuring unhindered passage.

Fulfilling the leader's instructions, Abakumov summoned Colonel Fyodor Grigoryevich Shubnyakov. In the 2nd Main Directorate of the MGB, he was the head of the department in charge of the intelligentsia. After Stalin's death, it will be established that Mikhoels "was under constant surveillance for a number of years."

"Abakumov demanded undercover development for the artistic director

Jewish theater of Mikhoels, which he left with him, - said Shubnyakov. - A few days later, Abakumov called me and in the presence of Comrade. Ogoltsova said that he had a special order to liquidate Mikhoels. All instructions were given personally by Abakumov, who received information on the progress of the operation via HF.

On January 7, 1948, Solomon Mikhoels had to go by train to Minsk to select several performances worthy of nomination for the Stalin Prize. Two days before the trip, the All-Russian Theater Society, which had already issued a business trip for Mikhoels, suddenly decided to send theater critic Vladimir Golubov Potapov along with him.

Vladimir Ilyich Golubov (pseudonym V. Potapov) wrote mainly about ballet; he was the author of a book about the leading ballerina of the Bolshoi Theater Galina Sergeevna Ulanova, who by that time had been awarded three Stalin Prizes, and defended a dissertation about her. As a critic, he was highly regarded. He grew up in Minsk and, as it turned out later, was a secret informer for the MGB. Golubov did not want to go, he mentioned that he was asked very much ...

In a conversation with Stalin, Abakumov said, "leading officials of the USSR Ministry of State Security were moving around, who could be entrusted with carrying out the operation. It was said - to entrust the operation to Ogoltsov, Tsanava and Shubnyakov.

Abakumov called the Minister of State Security of Belarus Lavrenty Fomich Tsanava in Minsk, but he did not dare to be frank over the government HF communications apparatus, he only asked:

- Are there opportunities in the MGB of the Byelorussian SSR to carry out an important decision of the government and the personal instructions of Comrade Stalin?

Tsanava, not knowing what he was talking about, answered in the affirmative.

In the evening, Abakumov called back:

- To carry out one important decision of the government and the personal instructions of Comrade Stalin, Ogoltsov leaves for Minsk with a group of workers, and you must assist him.

The "MGB battle group" left for Minsk in two cars - Ogoltsov himself, his assistant Major Alexander Kharlampievich Kosyrev, the head of the department of the 2nd Main Directorate (counterintelligence) Colonel Fyodor Grigoryevich Shubnyakov, employees of the "DR" department (terror and sabotage) Colonel Vasily Evgenievich Lebedev and senior lieutenant Boris Alekseevich Kruglov (specialty - sabotage in transport).

The Moscow battle group was located at Tsanava's dacha in the suburbs of Minsk - the village of Slep'yanka. Now Ogoltsov explained to the republican minister why they had come.

Lavrenty Fomich only asked why such a complicated method was chosen. Ogoltsov explained:

- The Americans are placing a big bet on Mikhoels, but it is not advisable to arrest him, since he is widely known abroad. However, there is nothing to go into politics, I have an order, it must be carried out.

Ogoltsov explained to Tsanava:

- The MGB combat group took measures to kill Mikhoels back in Moscow, but it was not possible to do this, since Mikhoels walked around Moscow surrounded by many women.

In Moscow, on January 10, Abakumov brought to Stalin a "generalized", that is, protocol composed by the Chekists of the interrogation of the arrested Goldstein. The protocol stated that "Mikhoels gave the task to get close to Alliluyeva and achieve a personal acquaintance with Grigory Morozov," who married Svetlana, the leader's daughter.

"It is necessary to notice all the little things," Mikhoels allegedly said, "not to lose sight of all the details of the relationship between Svetlana Stalina and Grigory Morozov. Based on your information, we will be able to develop the right course of action and inform our friends in the US as they are interested in these issues."

This is what Stalin wanted to read.

Strikingly, it was during these months that Stalin did everything to ensure that in Palestine

the Jewish state emerged. Authorized the supply of weapons to Palestinian Jews, allowed Jews from Poland and other Eastern European countries to emigrate to Palestine and fight for their historical homeland. But Stalin did not like the sincere interest of Soviet Jews in Israel, their willingness to help the Jewish state.

"It seems to me that Stalin believed in the mutual responsibility of people of the same origin, thought Ilya Ehrenburg. - After all, when he dealt with the "enemies of the people", he did not spare their relatives ... Well, in this case, it should be assumed that he attacked the Jews, considering them dangerous - all Jews are connected by one origin, and several million of them live in America ".

It was useless to argue with him, wrote Svetlana Alliluyeva. Stalin saw enemies everywhere: "It was already a pathology, it was a persecution mania from devastation, from loneliness ... He was extremely fierce against the whole world."

But the main thing is different. He was a man with a criminal mindset. With age and disease, these pathological features only intensified. He gave instructions to beat those arrested by mortal combat and easily ordered to take their lives. And in the service he took people of a certain warehouse - murderers and rapists. The participants in the case, which we are talking about, did not at all find it difficult to fulfill the criminal order, they did what not every professional executioner would undertake.

In the January days of the forty-eighth, the MGB combat group constantly followed Mikhoels, who was surrounded by many actors, directors and just fans. The arrival of the outstanding artist was a great event for theatrical Minsk. Ogoltsov called Abakumov: nothing is working.

"On the preparation and conduct of the operation," Ogoltsov said, "I reported to Abakumov twice or thrice via HF, and he, without hanging up, reported to the Instance via the Kremlin automatic telephone exchange," i.e. Stalin.

The authority in the language of those years is Stalin.

Abakumov demanded that the leader's order be carried out by any means and allowed the use of a secret agent of the 2nd Main Directorate of the MGB, who accompanied Mikhoels. This agent was theater expert Vladimir Golubov-Potapov.

"I was instructed to contact the agent and with his help take Mikhoels to the dacha, where he should be liquidated," Shubnyakov said. - At the turnout, I told the agent that there was a need to meet with Mikhoels in private, and asked the agent to organize this meeting. The agent completed the task by inviting Mikhoels to "a personal friend who lives in Minsk."

Solomon Mikhoels, a very open person who longed for communication, readily agreed. On the evening of January 12, he and Golubov-Potapov got into a car with Colonel Shubnyakov, who posed as "engineer Sergeyev." At the wheel was Senior Lieutenant Kruglov - in civilian clothes, of course. When the car drove into the gates of Tsanova's dacha, Shubnikov went to report to Ogoltsov:

- Mikhoels and the agent were taken to the dacha.

Ogoltsov on HF again contacted Abakumov. The minister called Stalin on the turntable. Stalin was still at the dacha. That evening he will arrive at the Kremlin late, the meeting of the Politburo will begin at half past eleven at night.

The leader confirmed his order. Abakumov ordered to act.

"In order to create the impression that Mikhoels and the agent were hit by a car while drunk, they were forced to drink a glass of vodka," said Colonel Shubnyakov. "Then they were killed one by one (first the agent, then Mikhoels) - crushed by a truck."

Behind the wheel of the "Studebaker", apparently, they put an employee of the Belarusian Ministry of State Security Major Nikolai Fedorovich Povzun.

The forensic medical examination established: "The deceased turned out to have broken all the ribs with a rupture of lung tissue, Mikhoels had a vertebral fracture, and Golubov-Potapov had

pelvic bones. All injuries were non-life-threatening."

Reading these documents is almost impossible. Chekists coolly crushed live people who were fully conscious and died in terrible agony with a truck. And at the same time, they did not understand why they were being killed and who the killers were ... If one of them was ordered to be considered an enemy of the Soviet authorities, then the second was their man, a state security informer! But cooperation with the MGB did not save either. There are no laws in the underworld.

Colonel Shubnikov:

"Having made sure that Mikhoels and the agent were dead, our group took the bodies to the city and threw them on the road of one of the streets located not far from the hotel. Moreover, the corpses were located in such a way that it seemed that Mikhoels and the agent were hit by a car that ran over them with front and rear ramps ...

Early in the morning, the bodies of Mikhoels and the agent were discovered by a passer-by, and police officers arrived at the scene and drew up a report on the inspection of the scene. On the same day, the forensic medical commission subjected the corpses of Mikhoels and the agent to an autopsy and found that their death was caused by a hit by a truck, which crushed them."

The real circumstances of the murder of Mikhoels were not a secret for everyone. Lazar Kaganovich, apparently, immediately understood what exactly happened. Apparently, therefore, his daughter told Mikhoels' relatives not to look for the truth. Lazar Moiseevich spoke Yiddish and willingly visited the Jewish theater until it became dangerous.

David Markish, the son of the repressed poet Perets Markish, recalled: "My mother's close friend Irina Dmitrievich Trofimenko, the wife of the commander of the Belarusian military district, called us in Moscow and said: "Mikhoels was killed at night." And she hung up. A few days later, Irina Trofimenko arrived from Minsk, told her mother - of course, in secret, her husband forbade talking about this topic - that Mikhoels was killed in the country, then his body was transported to Minsk and the death was staged under the wheels of a truck and that the whole thing the hands of the Belarusian Minister of the Ministry of State Security Tsanava.

The commander of the Belarusian Military District, Colonel General Sergei Georgievich Trofimenko, was awarded the "Gold Star" of the Hero of the Soviet Union during the war. He died relatively young.

"When Mikhoels was liquidated and this was reported to Stalin," Abakumov said, "he highly appreciated this event and ordered to award orders, which was done." On October 28, 1948, all participants in the double murder were secretly awarded: Tsanava received the Order of the Red Banner, Kruglov, Lebedev, Shubnyakov - the Order of the Patriotic War of the 1st degree, Kosyrev and Povzun - the Order of the Red Star. The next day, Abakumov and Ogoltsov received the Order of the Red Banner.

Fyodor Shubnyakov made a rapid career, on December 31, 1950 he became the head of the 2nd Main Directorate of the Ministry of State Security. Abakumov, recommending him, wrote to Stalin: "Colonel Shubnyakov is a capable Chekist, has experience in counterintelligence work, skillfully manages a subordinate apparatus and will cope with this matter." And at the end of the year he was arrested - in the case of the already former minister Abakumov. Shubnyakov was replaced as head of counterintelligence by Lavrenty Tsanava. Also not for long. Stalin constantly shuffled KGB cadres. Tsanava unexpectedly retired. Ogoltsov was sent as the Minister of State Security to Uzbekistan.

After the death of the leader, Beria, having become the Minister of the Interior, began to review the high-profile cases instituted at a time when he had nothing to do with state security. On April 3, 1953, Ogoltsov and Tsanava were arrested. The Presidium of the Central Committee ordered to cancel "the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on awarding orders and medals to the participants in the murder of Mikhoels and Golubov."

Knowing perfectly well the order in his department, Sergei Ivanovich Ogoltsov was afraid that they might try to poison him, recalls the son of the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, General

Bogdanov. Sitting behind bars, he ate and drank only what was guaranteed not to contain I.

Once on the bunk, Ogoltsov described in detail how he directed the murder of Mikhoels. Shubnyakov confirmed his testimony. Beria would have brought them to justice, but he himself was soon arrested.

And again everything has changed! The killers now called themselves the innocent victims of Lavrenty Pavlovich. Immediately after Beria's arrest, on June 26, 1953, Ogoltsov's wife sent a letter to Malenkov, who replaced Stalin as head of government:

"Not so long ago, on November 1, 1952, Comrade Stalin called Ogoltsov in Tashkent. Offering to return to work in Moscow, he said: "I don't trust you, but the party trusts you." How could it happen that a month after the death of the leader, Ogoltsov turned out to be a state criminal? .. My daughter and I ask you, Georgy Maximilianovich, to intervene in the fate of Ogoltsov.

From Malenkov's secretariat, they called Ogoltsov's wife, reassured her: everything was fine with her husband. will be good. Raisa Sergeevna wrote him another letter:

"Dear George Maximilianovich!

The call from you poured in a stream of life, illuminated us with a bright ray of hope for a close joyful meeting with her husband and father. We are waiting for him every day, every hour, every minute. We are waiting for him because we, as in ourselves, are sure of his innocence. When he, without working for almost a month, was at home, he went to the ministry to write the explanations that Beria demanded. Visibly nervous, he called blasphemy what was demanded of him. Talking on the phone with comrade. Ignatiev, he said that they demanded an explanation from him in a case that Comrade Stalin had once given a very high rating.

Ogoltsov was released. True, they took away the order received for the murder of Mikhoels - operation, which "Stalin gave a very high rating." The following year, he was retired. In 1959, by a government decree, they were deprived of the general rank "as having discredited himself during his work in the bodies and unworthy of the high rank of general in connection with this." This ended the punishment.

The prosecutor's office was obliged to initiate a case on the murder of Mikhoels and Golubov-Potapov and put the killers in the dock. But the Kremlin did not allow this shameful story to be made public. Like many others. They could not admit that the head of state himself turned into a criminal and made his henchmen ordinary criminals. The direct participants in the murder of Mikhoels were not touched at all. Shubnyakov lived to a ripe old age.

Employees of the Academy of Sciences Grinberg and Goldstein, the unfortunate people who were needed by the Chekists to fabricate a case against Solomon Mikhoels, died in prison. Yevgenia Alliluyeva, who was sentenced to ten years in prison by the Special Meeting of the Ministry of State Security, was released as a seriously ill person.

We were filming a documentary about the murder of Mikhoels in Minsk. Employees of the Belarusian Committee of State Security helped to restore the route that Mikhoels was taken by, they found the place in the former dacha of Tsanova, where he was killed. I was scared even stand there...

I thanked the then head of the KGB of the Republic of Belarus for the assistance, and he asked me to speak to the personnel - "to tell about my creative plans". Several hundred people gathered in the assembly hall.

Many years later, one of the participants in this meeting told me that in the hall in the back rows, among the veterans, was the same Chekist who, sitting at the wheel of a truck, crushed Mikhoels.

devil's mill

When Ignatiev collapsed with a heart attack, the leader tried on the role of the owner of the Lubyanka

Sergei Ivanovich Ogoltsov. But he came down with acute thrombophlebitis. Stalin instructed Colonel-General Sergei Arsenyevich Goglidze to lead the state security apparatus, who proved himself in the Far East.

Another colleague of Beria, Sergei Goglidze, began as the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Georgia. On July 31, 1941, Goglidze arrived in Khabarovsk. He not only headed the regional administration. He was approved by the authorized NKVD throughout the Far East. He became the master of a considerable part of the country.

There is nothing left of the Goglidze mansion, with its huge garden and its own tennis court, in Khabarovsk. But to this day, Chekist veterans warmly remember their boss as a caring person: "At that time there were no fruits for sale. He ordered to provide each employee of the department with a certain amount of fresh apples and dried fruits. A good addition to ration cards."

Professor of Medicine Anatoly Alekseevich Konstantinov recalled how two state security officers came home to his father, who was repairing watches: a major and a captain. We went into the apartment. The captain asked:

— Konstantinov?

The father replied:

- Yes.

Captain:

- Pack up.

Mother in tears, father barely uttered:

- With things?

Here only the major deigned to explain:

- We, Comrade Konstantinov, came to you as a watchmaker. A very valuable clock has stopped in Comrade Goglidze's office, it must be fixed. We were told that you are the best master in Khabarovsk.

Konstantinov Sr. calmed down, collected his tools and went to the MGB headquarters. The watch really turned out to be original: a case in the form of a ship's cabin with a mast and a steering wheel that swayed - it was a pendulum. All in bronze with gilding. They were generously paid for the work, although the father refused the money of the state security department.

In the huge camp economy, which was subordinate to Goglidze, very, very famous people were kept. In the club building of the regional department of internal affairs, the famous conductor and composer Eddie Rosner, head of the jazz orchestra and Honored Artist of the Byelorussian SSR, delighted the ears of the Chekists in the evenings. It was not supposed to applaud and shout "bravo" to him. Enemy of the people. He was arrested in 1946.

On the other side of the border was the puppet state of Manchukuo, created by the Japanese who attacked China. Formally, it was controlled by the Chinese, in fact, all power belonged to the Japanese military, a secret war was waged with it. In Khabarovsk, Goglidze distinguished himself with the special event "Mill".

This incredible story was revealed when, after the war, one of the residents of the city came to the regional committee of the party and asked for a meeting with the first secretary. He explained that he would only talk to the owner of the region, to no one else, because the information he had could not be trusted to anyone else.

The first secretary of the Khabarovsk Regional Committee was a professional party worker Alexei Klementievich Cherny. He was shocked by what he heard from this man. The conversation in the first secretary's office took place after the death of Stalin and the execution of Beria.

The visitor told the first secretary that during the war years he was recruited by the Chekists and transferred to the adjacent territory, to Manchuria. There the Japanese captured him. Under torture, he could not stand it and agreed to work for them. When he was returned to Soviet territory, he was arrested by the Chekists and - as a traitor - convicted and sent to a camp. And here the most interesting begins.

He served his term, returned to Khabarovsk, and suddenly on the street quite by chance met the same White Guard who interrogated and beat him at the Manchu outpost! Seeing the White Guard, he hurried to the regional party committee to inform the party authorities.

The owner of the region ordered the regional department of state security: check that it is your White Guards walking around the streets?! When it became clear what was happening, a commission was formed in the regional committee. Her report shocked even the battered party secretaries.

Of course, there were no White Guards in Khabarovsk. The imaginary "White Guard" turned out to be a Chekist. But one of the most sophisticated operations of the state security department was revealed. It was impossible to cover up this story. The regional party had to report to the top leadership in Moscow. The Presidium of the Central Committee instructed the Party Control Committee under the Central Committee of the CPSU to investigate and punish the perpetrators.

The audit established that in 1941, with the sanction of the allied People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the leadership of the Khabarovsk NKVD department created the so-called false zakordon, which was called the "mill" in the correspondence of state security workers.

Fifty kilometers from the city, in the location of one of the border detachments, near the border with Manchuria, a complex of buildings was built: a Soviet border outpost, a Manchurian border police post and a county Japanese military mission with Chinese-style gates. Inside, everything was equipped as expected. Special wooden furniture was ordered for the office of the chief of the Japanese mission. They even deployed a telephone exchange that served the buildings of the "false cordon". The participants of the operation were sewn Japanese or Manchurian uniforms.

According to the plan of the Khabarovsk Chekists, the "mill" was intended to check Soviet citizens who were suspicious of the state security agencies. The Chekists recruited these people. Calling to show patriotism and serve the motherland, they persuaded them to fulfill a mission of particular importance abroad. When they agreed, they gave a subscription, received an operational pseudonym; then staged a false border crossing into Manchuria.

They discussed the plan for leaving the cordon with them, came up with a legend according to which they were to live abroad. Future agents were given clothes, food, some money. We discussed ways to communicate. Meeting places or safe houses were named according to the "All Harbin" directory, which was available in the regional state security department. As a password, they handed over half a banknote worth one gobi (the currency of the state of Manchukuo), the second - already on Chinese territory, the messenger had to present. Some were even given weapons, of course with blanks.

It never occurred to people that they were victims of the Chekist game and that absolutely everything was happening exclusively on Soviet territory. As soon as they "crossed the border", they were immediately seized by imaginary Manchurian policemen. The detention was carried out extremely harshly. They tied their hands behind their backs, put a noose around their necks, and so led them to the "Manchurian frontier post." Sometimes they beat me right away. They "woke up" the head of the post, who conducted the first interrogation in broken Russian.

After that, the alleged Chinese border guards handed over the arrested to the alleged Japanese military. The transport itself was excruciating. They tied their hands and feet. A cotton cap covering the face was put on the head, and a bag was also put on top. For a long time they drove on a gig without springs over bumps. In the so-called Japanese county military mission, operatives of the NKVD, dressed in Japanese military uniforms and posing as White Guard emigrants, began interrogation.

They used real Chinese and real Japanese. For example, a certain Japanese who, back in 1937, crossed the Soviet border, pretended to be the head of the Japanese military mission. The border guards grabbed him. They were sentenced to be shot. They commuted the death penalty to ten years and sent him to a false cordon. Then the party organs were indignant at the cynicism of this story. It turned out that the convicted Japanese

scout interrogated innocent Soviet citizens!

As for the Chinese, they were communist partisans who went over to the Soviet service. They were told that the detainees were Japanese spies, and the Chinese behaved especially cruelly. But foreigners were kept only in auxiliary roles. They did not have Chekist training. In November 1947, a Soviet citizen, a Chinese Yang Lingpu, who worked as a cook on a false cordon, was indignant at the arbitrariness that was happening there. Chekists shot him. Then they killed two more of the false cordon servants, fearing that they might tell what was going on there.

The interrogations, as stated in the documents, were carried out by the Chekists with the use of physical measures, that is, simply put, they were beaten. This was done by the subordinates of Sergei Goglidze, employees of the Khabarovsk regional department of state security. Three of them, who especially distinguished themselves, until recently themselves were imprisoned - in the inner prison of the Khabarovsk State Security Department. One can imagine what they did if they were imprisoned in those years! However, they did not suffer for long. At the request of their comrades, they were released, and they went to continue their service on a false cordon.

The protocols of interrogations were written according to the rules of the old spelling, canceled after the revolution by the Soviet authorities. The Chekists, who portrayed the "White Guards", even learned a certain number of Japanese and Chinese words. The interrogation papers read "Special Detention Prison of the Imperial Nippon Military Mission in Fuyuan City."

They didn't disdain anything. They threatened to shoot and torture. And from the next room, where, as if interrogation was also going on, screams and groans were heard. Sincerely believing that they are in the hands of the enemy, and as a result of the use of measures of physical influence, it was said in the certificate of the Party Control Committee under the Central Committee of the CPSU, people could not stand it and told what exactly the Chekists had instructed them to do. Several people committed suicide.

During interrogations, those who fell into the devil's mill were required to agree to work for Japanese intelligence. When they agreed, they were transferred across the imaginary border to the area of the Soviet frontier post, and here they were arrested as foreign spies. If a person refused to fulfill the task of the Japanese, he was tied up and in this form was transported by boat, as if to Soviet territory. In summer, in those places, hordes of mosquitoes, which during these hours that the operation was carried out, literally ate. It was also a form of influence. The helpless man lay on the ground until the Soviet border detachment appeared and "quite by chance" did not find him.

148 people were let through the devil's mill! Eight were shot. Five died, two of them committed suicide. Several people were used by the Chekists for undercover work. The rest, having passed through the Special Meeting, were sent to the camps. This means that the Chekists reported to Moscow that they had caught an incredible number of Japanese spies. And these are orders, stars on shoulder straps, promotion.

There were Chekists who doubted the correctness of such methods. But they did not work for a long time; they were fired and, as they said in those days, "lowered into the basement", that is planted themselves.

Party Control Committee under the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Department of Administrative Bodies of the Central Committee submitted a note to management, in which everything is called by its proper name:

"In 1941–1949, provocative methods in intelligence and operational work, which entailed serious consequences.

The former head of the Khabarovsk department of the NKVD Goglidze and the former head of the 2nd department of the NKVD of the USSR Fedotov, who had direct control over the work of the "mill", used the "mill" for anti-state purposes, to fabricate materials of accusation against Soviet people.

A narrow circle of employees of the central apparatus of the NKVD of the USSR and the NKVD department for the Khabarovsk Territory knew about the existence of the "mill". All activities related to

use were kept strictly confidential. Persons who suspected the real purpose of the false zakordon were subjected to physical destruction.

One of the main organizers of this dirty provocation is Lieutenant General Fedotov. As the head of the 2nd NKVD department, Fedotov personally supervised the work of the "mill", reported on it to Beria and Merkulov, carried out their instructions for the use of a false cordon ... All correspondence and reports of the Khabarovsk department of the NKVD with the center about the work of the "mill" were addressed only to Fedotov, bypassing office. Not a single event involving the use of a false zakordon was held without his sanction. Fedotov personally insisted to the former enemy leadership of the NKVD of the USSR on the application of execution to a number of innocent Soviet citizens.

Fedotov was fired from the authorities and stripped of his general's shoulder straps. But they did not judge.

October 12, 1956 adopted a resolution of the secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU:

"1. To instruct the CPC under the Central Committee of the CPSU to consider the issue of party responsibility of employees of state security agencies who committed gross violations of socialist legality in the Khabarovsk Territory in 1941-1949.

2. To propose to the State Security Committee under the Council of Ministers of the USSR to investigate and resolve the issue of the expediency of working in the KGB bodies of persons involved in these violations.

3. Instruct the USSR Prosecutor's Office to expedite the consideration and verification of cases against persons convicted on the basis of a false cordon.

The bureau of the Khabarovsk Regional Committee for gross violation of socialist legality and unjustified arrests of Soviet citizens expelled three former employees of the regional state security department from the party. This is what was limited.

The department of administrative bodies of the Central Committee of the CPSU named other people involved in these crimes:

"When studying the issue of violation of Soviet legality by the Khabarovsk department of the NKVD, we established a document indicating that the use of the "mill" in the intelligence and operational work of the state security organs, permission for its practical use and financing was authorized by Comrade Serov.

In a letter from the Deputy Head of the UNKGB of the Khabarovsk Territory, Colonel Chesnokov dated April 6, 1941, addressed to the head of the 2nd Directorate of the NKGB Fedotov, it is reported that the commissioning of the "mill" is scheduled for June 1, 1941, and raises the question of disbursing funds for the construction and maintenance mill personnel. The letter contains a resolution of the former deputy head of the 2nd Directorate Raikhman with the following content: "Comrade Guzovsky. Deputy people's commissar comrade Serov reported. He authorized the organization of the "mill" and offered to submit an estimate. Please give me an estimate today. Reichman. 6.5. 41".

For the construction and maintenance of the personnel of the "mill" during the period of its existence from From 1941 to 1949 more than one million rubles of state funds were spent.

State Security Captain Alexander Alexandrovich Guzovsky at that time led the 2-m department (combating Japanese and Chinese intelligence) of the 2nd Directorate of the NKGB of the USSR. He rose to the rank of colonel, worked in France on the intelligence line. In 1947 he was removed from the organs. Ivan Alexandrovich Serov became an army general and the first chairman of the KGB. No claims were made against him.

The whole story remained a mystery behind seven seals. The country was unaware of this tragedy. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Semenovitch Semenov wrote in his diary on February 12, 1964:

"Third day of the plenum on agriculture. I am sitting next to the Chairman of the Party State Control of the RSFSR. He said that in 1952 he went to the Khabarovsk special district - there was then no law, as if some kind of boyar estate, they did what they wanted. The political ones were at the bottom of the pyramid of criminals, and criminals dominated them. In total, about seven million people passed through this area, and approximately

one and a half to two million died. They tried to kill the political ones by not sending food to remote areas, although it was.

My interlocutor nervously ran his fingers over the music stand, and his face was distorted with a grimace:
- And why these meat grinders. What savagery!

The face was cute and humane. Here for the first time, perhaps, I felt so clearly the whole tragedy of the situation in those years that are now called "cult". After all, I was so far from the arena of action, and perhaps that is why I am writing these lines.

Apparently, Semyonov was talking with Georgy Vasilyevich Enyutin. At that time he was the chairman of the Party and State Control Committee of the RSFSR, and in the last Stalin years he worked as an inspector of the Central Committee of the CPSU, so he knew a lot.

Head into the well

On December 31, 1950, Sergei Arsenievich Goglidze was returned to Moscow. Approved as a member of the collegium of the MGB, head of the Main Directorate of Security in Transport. He came to the Lubyanka at a very dangerous time for the Chekists. There were arrests of the heads of the Ministry of State Security.

A large group of generals was arrested immediately after the former Minister Abakumov in the summer of 1951. Stalin did not stop there and continued to shake up the frames. As if he intended to completely replace the personnel at the Lubyanka. A large purge in the KGB team lasted for several years - until the last days of his life.

Beria proposed to make Goglidze the Minister of State Security of Georgia, where there was also a big purge, and Lavrenty Pavlovich wanted to keep everything under control. But Stalin left Goglidze in Moscow. February 13, 1952 appointed him Deputy Minister of State Security. Such a person as Sergei Arsenievich Goglidze was what Stalin needed for the new Great Terror.

The imprisoned Chekists were perplexed: what is their fault? And during the interrogation, they heard from Colonel Ryumin, appointed on October 19, 1951, immediately as Deputy Minister of State Security, what they themselves recently said to others:

– Your guilt is proved by the fact of your arrest.

Ryumin received an apartment in a house in Staro-Pimenovsky Lane, from where the recent deputy head of the investigative unit, Colonel Boris Veniaminovich Rhodes, was evicted, who was sent with a big demotion to serve in the MGB department in the Crimea.

In the last years and especially the last months of his life, Stalin was more concerned with the affairs of the Ministry of State Security than with the affairs of the Central Committee of the Party or the Council of Ministers. Almost every day I read the papers coming from the Lubyanka.

The head of the 7th department of the MGB, Viktor Ivanovich Alidin, recalled that Stalin suddenly became interested in the work of the external intelligence of the MGB (surveillance and surveillance of suspects). He ordered in the Chekist apparatus throughout the country to allocate it to a separate, independent service. The leader instructed to prepare this issue for consideration at the Presidium of the Central Committee. The 7th Directorate did not play any significant role in the activities of the Ministry of State Security, but Stalin's order was law.

With the youth from the MGB, Stalin worked like a good professor with promising graduate students. He invited me to his dacha and explained how to work. He edited the documents himself, told how to draw up an indictment. He himself came up with what questions investigators should ask during interrogations. He himself decided who and when to arrest, in which prison to keep. And of course, determined the verdict. It can be said that Stalin performed on a voluntary basis the duties of the head of the investigative unit for especially important cases of the Ministry of State Security.

The key position of Deputy Minister of State Security for Personnel was taken by the former First Secretary of the Odessa Regional Committee, Aleksey Alekseevich Epishev, who would then head the Main Political Directorate of the Army and Navy for many years. Epishev expelled from

Lubyankas of military counterintelligence officers as Abakumov's people. At the party conference of the apparatus, Epishev proposed to elect to the party committee such an "honored person" as the new deputy minister Ryumin.

The positions were occupied by people who owed their ascent not to their own merits, but to the will of the leader. They idolized him. Once in favor, for a while they received a particle of Stalin's unlimited power. Stalin endowed ambitious and vain officials with unlimited power over people, long unthinkable in other societies. Confidence in their greatness was reinforced by a system of distribution of benefits available only to those who held a high post. And this gave an additional sweetness to belonging to the highest circle of the elect.

We can, but you can't - this is the most important principle of life.

Passions and interests, way of life, life of officials - everything was focused on the most comfortable arrangement of one's own life, extracting the maximum benefits from one's position. And the duty of duty to deliver ritual speeches about communism only strengthened the habit of doublethink and brought up boundless cynicism. The regime gave a lot to those who broke through to the top. It's not just about material wealth. The functionaries who found themselves in the system were satisfied with their lives, did not experience any discord with their conscience and believed that they were acting in accordance with their convictions.

The owners of the Lubyanka were divided into two categories. Obvious fanatics believed Stalin, shot him in his name and died with his name on their lips. Careerists adapted to any turn of the party line: whoever was needed was shot. They understood that they were committing a crime, albeit a sanctioned one. They were beaten at night when there were no technical workers in the building. They did not talk aloud about beatings, torture and executions. They used euphemisms.

"How many ruthless people have multiplied, performing heavy state duties for the Cheka, Fisk, the collectivization of peasants, etc.," wrote Mikhail Mikhailovich Prishvin in his diary. - Is it only to think that all this is young people, they will live, look and soften..."

They didn't soften.

The suffering of the people did not find the slightest response from the ruling class. Major party officials broke away from real life and calmly doomed fellow citizens to severe trials. That's what's amazing. The leaders of the country, the bureaucracy, the security officers, as the analysis of the documents received by them shows, were well aware of the scale of the famine and the suffering of people. But historians note that there is not a single document in which the owners of the country would regret the death of millions of fellow citizens. They completely lacked simple, human feelings.

They began to feel fear from the machine of destruction they created when they themselves became its victims. The wife of the first deputy people's commissar of internal affairs (under Yezhov), Mikhail Petrovich Frinovsky, said during interrogation: "My husband returned from work very late. He said it was hard work. I could not sleep at night, I went out into the garden and walked all night. He said: the same fate awaits me. And I wasn't wrong. He was shot - after Yezhov.

To some extent, a powerful minister or general was just one of the cogs in this gigantic system that seemed to exist on its own. But he also twisted, adjusted and started this whole mechanism, which could work only because many thousands of state security officers and an even greater number of voluntary assistants consciously chose this service for themselves and were proud of it.

Academician Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, the first of the Russian scientists awarded the Nobel Prize, too great and too old to be afraid, wrote to Molotov: "We lived and live under an unrelenting regime of terror and violence ... To those who angrily sentence masses of their own kind to death and with satisfaction carry it out, as well as those who are forcibly accustomed to participate in it, it is hardly possible

remain beings who feel and think humanely. On the other hand, it is hardly possible for those who are turned into slaughtered animals to become creatures with a sense of their own human dignity.

All structures of society were permeated with state security officers. Fear of arrest revealed all the evil that is in a person. It began to seem that the share of scoundrels was higher than usual. It was difficult to resist because the abyss opened up before the man. Fear and distrust became the main driving forces in Soviet society. The result was a paralysis of any initiative and an unwillingness to take responsibility.

Alexander Isaevich Solzhenitsyn wrote about the degree of corruption of society in The Gulag Archipelago: "I attributed to myself disinterested selflessness. Meanwhile, there was well-prepared executioner. And if I got into the NKVD school under Yezhov, maybe I would have grown up with Beria right there? In front of the pit, into which we were about to push our offenders, we stop, dumbfounded: but it just happened that it was not we, but they who were the executioners. And Malyuta Skuratov would have called us - perhaps, and we would not have messed up!

In fear or for money, an apartment, or even simply in the hope of the favor of the authorities, was reported on relatives, neighbors and colleagues. There was no end to the volunteers. The totalitarian state not only destroyed, but also corrupted. Back in the thirties, the country was divided into those who sat and those who planted. For a considerable number of people, service in the Gulag and on the Lubyanka created a privileged way of life. Approximately one million people served in this system, together with their families it is several million. And if we also take into account the party and state apparatus and their families? For several prisoners - a guard, for several dozen - already a security unit, and also guards, camp authorities, the operational-Chekist unit, the central apparatus of the Main Directorate of Camps, the Gulag. And if we also take into account the huge party and state apparatus, and their families, who also lived well, while others were in prison?

In early November 1952, the leader cracked down on his Chekists. He summoned Ignatiev, Goglidze, Ryasnoy (Lieutenant General Vasily Stepanovich Ryasnoy, another deputy minister of state security) and Ryumin. In an extremely irritated state, he reprimanded them for the fact that the investigation into the case of doctors Lechsanupra was slowly going on:

- Investigators work without a soul. They clumsily use the contradictions and reservations of the arrested to expose them. Poorly asking questions. They do not cling like hooks to every opportunity, even the smallest one, to catch, to take the prisoner into their own hands. Among the Chekists there are many careerists, self-seekers, loafers who put personal well-being above state interests.

"Stalin," Goglidze recalled, "believed that due to the political carelessness, short-sightedness and complacency of the employees of the MGB, bordering on crime, the terrorist group in the Lechsanupra of the Kremlin was not exposed in a timely manner.

When Ignatiev fell ill, on November 20, Stalin summoned Goglidze, Ogoltsov and Pitovranov. This time he attacked them because they refused to use sabotage and terror against enemies abroad:

- Hiding behind rotten and harmful arguments about the alleged incompatibility of sabotage and terror against class enemies with Marxism-Leninism, you have slipped from the position of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism to the positions of bourgeois liberalism and pacifism.

On the same day, Stalin appointed Goglidze First Deputy Minister and instructed him to lead the investigation into particularly important cases. Goglidze was engaged in arrests and interrogations of Chekists who had lost their trust, and killer doctors. He reported to Stalin almost daily.

At a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee on December 1, 1952, the leader again started talking about "ill-being" in the department of state security: "laziness and decay deeply affected the MGB", the Chekists "dimmed their vigilance." He demanded a complete redesign of the device.

"The discussion of the project for the reorganization of the MGB," recalled Goglidze, "was held in

extremely hot, hot environment. We were bombarded with accusations of a political nature." The leader was not shy in terms, he promised to carry out "a nationwide purge of the Chekists from nobles, idlers and degenerates."

Stalin reprimanded the leaders of the MGB for the fact that they did not have revolutionary investigators, that the investigators - bosses, parasites, Mensheviks, did not show any effort, were content only with the confessions of the arrested ...

Goglidze agreed with the leader that the KGB apparatus is working very badly: "So far, neither undercover nor investigative methods have revealed whose villainous hand directed the terrorist activities of the arrested doctors Egorov, Vinogradov and others. Investigators work without a soul, they don't cling like hooks to every even small opportunity to catch, take the enemy in their hands and completely expose him."

On December 4, Stalin signed the devastating resolution of the Central Committee "On the situation in the MGB and on sabotage in the medical business," which stated that many state security workers "are stricken with an idiotic disease of complacency and carelessness, they showed political myopia in the face of wrecking and espionage and sabotage work of enemies."

The leader took an almost daily interest in the course of the investigation into the doctors' case.

Goglidze: "Comrade Stalin spoke, as a rule, with great irritation, scolded, threatened, demanded to beat the arrested: "Beat, beat, beat with mortal combat."

Interrogation protocols were immediately forwarded to the leader. He told Ignatiev:

"We will be able to determine for ourselves what is right and what is wrong, what is important and what is not important.

The investigators wanted to distinguish themselves. Arrest followed arrest.

Goglidze: "It was enough for some arrested person to name a new doctor, as a rule, Comrade Stalin's order was to arrest him."

Stalin was annoyed that the Chekists "missed", as he put it, the enemies within the country. On December 15, at a meeting of the commission for the reorganization of the state security department, Stalin threatened:

- Communists who look askance at intelligence, at the work of the Cheka, who are afraid of getting dirty, you have to throw your head in the well...

It was on these days, in February 1953, that the first secretary of the Smolensk regional committee, Boris Fyodorovich Nikolaev, addressed the Central Committee: "Agriculture in the region is in an extremely difficult situation. The average cash income per household in 1950 was 777 rubles and in 1951 - 576 rubles. Due to low incomes, collective farmers do not want to work. Since 1948, 140,000 collective farmers have left the collective farms. There are not enough people. Collective farms allow large crop losses and receive poor quality products. Only 13 percent of cattle are housed in typical cattle yards, the rest of the cattle are housed in unsuitable, cold rooms, which leads to mass disease."

A huge country fell into poverty, the village was starving, and the senile mind of the leader closed on conspiracies and intrigues.

He took care of the youth, which he gathered in the MGB. Black cash, the distribution of money in envelopes, was secretly invented by Stalin: the highest officials were given a second salary in envelopes, from which not only taxes, but also party dues were not paid. On his instructions, the new investigators were provided with nomenklatura benefits that were bestowed on high-ranking officials, for example, they were attached to the Kremlin Medical and Sanitary Directorate, although this was not supposed to be their position.

Those who had the right to use the hospital and polyclinic of the Lechsanupra Kremlin were handed a numbered medical card (in the forties these were four-digit numbers - that is, several thousand people used medicine for the authorities) with a photograph and signed by the head of Lechsanupra. The card contained the number of the medical history, the name, surname, date of birth, place of work, position and date of joining the party. On a separate page, family members were listed, indicating the degree of relationship and age.

The typographically printed rules for using the medical card read:

"The medical card is valid only for the persons listed in it, and cannot be transferred to others. The transfer of a medical card to persons not included in the card entails the deprivation of the right to use medical care in the Lechsanupra of the Kremlin.

When changing jobs, the medical card must be immediately re-registered in the Lechsanupra of the Kremlin at the accounting office tel. K 4-16-74 (Comintern St., 6). Failure to report a change of job within 3 days entails removal from medical care.

Stalin, in order to please the Chekists, reintroduced special ranks for state security workers in order to put them above army and navy officers. On August 21, 1952, a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR appeared, and all lieutenants, captains, majors and colonels of the MGB added the words "state security" to the military rank. For the highest commanding staff, the title "general of state security" was introduced.

Lidia Korneevna Chukovskaya, the daughter of a famous writer, wondered painfully
question:

"This is what I can neither understand nor imagine. How could thousands, tens of thousands of investigators, that is, normal young men, be grown up who would gladly torture unarmed, defenseless men and women - those whom they knew were not to blame? The investigators had a set of torture instruments in their desk drawers.

If the arrested person did not sign the protocol, a team of professional criminals was called in, who tortured the prisoner to the point of signing or to death. (For example, I know the names of those criminals who tortured my husband. There were four of them ...) Okay, they are criminals, but who is the investigator? Tens of thousands of investigators? How were they fabricated, in what factory were tens of thousands of sadists created?

Does this mean that tens of thousands of potential Khvatovs, who tormented Vavilov, who broke two of Landau's ribs during the investigation, were always hidden among the people? In ours - or in any?

Investigator Alexander Grigoryevich Khvat interrogated the outstanding geneticist Academician Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov, who died behind bars. The great physicist Academician Lev Davidovich Landau was friends with Chukovskaya's husband. After the future Nobel Prize winner himself spent a year in prison, he came to Chukovskaya, spoke about the interrogations, mentioned that two ribs were injured: "However, he quickly cut off his story about the beatings, sparing either me or himself. He didn't talk about himself anymore.

The terrible practice of the work of the Chekists under Stalin was based on a rotational method. A team was formed that did its part of the work. At this time, they received everything - material benefits, titles, positions, orders, honor, glory, the right to communicate with the leader. Valuable items confiscated from the arrested were transferred to special stores, where they were sold to employees of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. When they completed their task, the team was destroyed ...

In those months, new people came to the Lubyanka. It was the turn of the next brigade, she got all the benefits. Young people who were not educated had a dizzying career. The principle "who was nothing will become everything" was put into practice. People were appointed to high positions, remaining illiterate.

Stalin put forward the people he needed and surrounded them with care. When the need for them passed, without regret refused their services. This was often followed by a firing squad.

The department of arrests and searches, which was part of the 7th department of the MGB, was overloaded work. One of the employees of the department with a strange gleam in his eyes said:

– I love my job, I like to take people at night.

I especially liked taking on recent colleagues and bosses.

The Taming of the Generals

Fear of Marshal Zhukov

The war was over, the leader was no longer dependent on his commanders, and his inherent suspicion of the military took over. In conversations with marshals and generals, there were reproaches of "arrogance" and "lack of Bolshevik modesty." In these words, the axis reflected a certain concern of the leader: what if the military marshals and generals, crowned with military glory, become less manageable?

Marshals and generals returned victorious from the war, in a blaze of glory. Will they begin to claim a more prominent place in the life of the country? So Stalin decided to point them out to them place.

The day after the Victory Parade in 1945, Marshal Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov gathered generals close to him at his dacha. Happy military leaders happily drank to Georgy Konstantinovich as an outstanding commander. All conversations at Zhukov's dacha were recorded, and the records were shown to Stalin. He was extremely annoyed, because he considered himself the real winner, and not Zhukov at all.

In this world, Napoleon used to say, there are only two possibilities - either to command or to obey. Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov belonged to those who from childhood dream of commanding others. He had the ability to subdue himself. He was born this way, this is his genetic structure.

Zhukov took off, as other distinguished chiefs took off. Stalin was disgusted by the usual form of career growth. He immediately appointed the one he liked to a high post. And then - like anyone else. Georgy Konstantinovich turned out to be the one who, in any position, place.

Zhukov did not feel fear either on the battlefield, littered with corpses, or on the Kremlin parquet, rubbed to a shine. He had the courage of determination, without which a military leader, a commander, is unthinkable. And strong nerves. He kept moving up. Not because someone told him. And because it was impossible not to promote it.

In the autumn of 1941, when the Wehrmacht stood at the gates of Moscow, Stalin, in desperation, called on General Zhukov for help. This infinitely tough and self-confident person instilled hope and confidence in the leader. Zhukov led the defense of encircled Leningrad. On October 5, 1941, Stalin ordered him to immediately arrive in the capital.

Directly from the airfield, Zhukov was taken to the leader's Kremlin apartment. Stalin had a cold and looked bad. He was furious at the inept actions of the front commanders who defended the capital. He approached the map, pointing to the Vyazma region, and explained:

- It's a very difficult situation. The Germans can approach Moscow in three or four days. I cannot get a report on the true state of affairs from the Western and Reserve Fronts. Neither Konev nor Budyonny know where their troops are and what the enemy is doing.

The roads to Moscow, Zhukov recalled, were essentially open. In this situation, he took command of the Western Front with the task of stopping the Germans.

On October 16, having already signed the decree on the evacuation of the capital, Stalin nevertheless asked Zhukov if the troops could hold Moscow? Georgy Konstantinovich firmly replied that he had no doubts about it.

"It's not bad that you have such confidence," said a pleased Stalin.

The unshakable stamina of Zhukov, who believed that the capital could be defended, had an effect on Stalin. It turned out that there was no need to run. It is possible and necessary, fulfilling your duty, to fight for the city. Zhukov's iron will helped save Moscow in 1941. But he was reproached for not sparing human and material resources.

Zhukov was asked in his declining years:

- Is it true, Georgy Konstantinovich, that you were cruel in the war?

Marshall replied:

- There was a time - the war is generally cruel.

"Many of those who write about Zhukov emphasize the coolness of the commander's character, - wrote the editor-in-chief of the Red Star, General David Ortenberg. But he also had something else. For example, affection for people who shared with him the hardships of the war.

Until his death, he was admired by almost the whole world. He has secured his place in history forever. And if you can name a person who is loved by the people, then this is it. Nevertheless, the marshal lived a significant part of his life in disgrace, waiting for arrest for several years.

Marshal was sure of his infallibility. If they tried to object to him, he said:

- I have already reported to the Supreme Commander, and he has approved my considerations!

Stalin distinguished him from all the marshals. He made him his deputy, as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. He made sure that he found himself in the most important areas, so that the main successes were associated with his name: where Zhukov is, there is victory. And after the war he took up arms against the marshal. One gets the feeling that the leader was jealous of Zhukov, envious of his fame. But the sun cannot envy the moon, can it? Stalin - so great - jealous of a simple marshal?

Already from the middle of the war, the state security organs, informing Stalin about the mood among the intelligentsia, paid attention to such statements: "The people, in addition to Stalin, put forward their leaders - Zhukov, Rokossovsky and others. These leaders are beating the Germans, and after victory they will demand a place in the sun. One of these popular generals will become a dictator."

During the war, the leader was indulgent towards the military. They tell such a story. A testament was going on in the leader's office when the assistant reported that the general called by Stalin had arrived.

"Let him come in," ordered the leader.

The general appeared with difficulty on his feet. He was deathly pale, realizing what a terrible crime he had committed. Everyone held their breath, waiting for an incredible outburst of anger. But Stalin gently asked:

- Are you unwell right now?

"That's right," the general choked out.

"Then we will meet with you tomorrow," Stalin said.

When the general left, Stalin remarked:

- A comrade today received an order for a successful operation. What will he be called to Headquarters, he, of course, did not know. Well, he celebrated his award to celebrate.

Even if it's apocryphal, it's close to the truth. After the war, times were different. The leader was no longer dependent on his generals. Not even a year had passed since Marshal Zhukov, crowned with glory, hosted the Victory Parade in Moscow, and clouds were already gathering over him. The first deputy people's commissar of defense was a purely civilian - Nikolai Alexandrovich Bulganin, before the war - the chairman of the executive committee of the Moscow City Council.

Why did Stalin subordinate to him a whole galaxy of commanders who won the war? It was a gesture. The leader did not want to elevate one of the famous military leaders, on the contrary, he appointed a commissar over them, and one who was obviously disliked by the troops.

Zhukov received the post of commander in chief of the ground forces. Moreover, the airborne troops were withdrawn from their composition, which became an independent branch of the military. Zhukov did not like the fact that, as commander in chief, he would actually be subordinate not to Stalin, but to Bulganin, whom he did not put a penny on.

The leader took Zhukov's dissatisfaction as disagreement with his decisions.

The Ministry of State Security has begun, as it is called in professional language, the operational development of the marshal. In other words, they began to collect evidence against him and followed his every step. It was called the undercover business "Knot". In official documents of the Ministry of State Security, Zhukov was referred to as: "a person claiming a special position."

Stalin said with undisguised irony:

- Everyone praises Zhukov, but he does not deserve it. They say that Zhukov at the front before any operation acted like this: he would take a handful of earth, sniff it and then say - you can, they say, start an offensive, or, conversely, you can't, they say, carry out the planned operation.

In April 1946, the commander of the Air Force, Chief Marshal of Aviation Alexander Alexandrovich Novikov, was arrested. In the investigative unit, Abakumov had a division of labor. Some, illiterate, knocked out testimony from those arrested. Others, with education, wrote protocols. That's what they were called: "cutters" and "clerks".

- The investigators were divided into three categories: one stabs, the other writes, the third finalizes, - Alexander Mikhailovich Rekunkov, Prosecutor General of the USSR, will later explain with knowledge of the case.

Stalin was presented with the testimony signed by Novikov: "Zhukov is very cunningly and cautiously trying to belittle the leading role in the war of the Supreme High Command, and at the same time, Zhukov, without hesitation, sticks out his role in the war as a commander and even declares that all the main plans for military operations developed them".

On June 1, 1946, at a meeting of the Supreme Military Council, Georgy Konstantinovich was subjected to a public execution. His guilt was formulated as follows: "Marshal Zhukov, despite the high position created for him by the government and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, considered himself offended, expressed dissatisfaction with the decisions of the government ... Marshal Zhukov, having lost all modesty and being carried away by a sense of personal ambition, believed that his merits were not sufficiently appreciated, attributed to himself the development and conduct of all the main operations of the Great Patriotic War.

Having publicly humiliated and insulted Zhukov, Stalin deprived him of the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces and Deputy Minister of the Armed Forces. He was sent to command the troops of the secondary Odessa Military District.

In February 1947, Zhukov was withdrawn from the list of candidates for membership in the Central Committee. On the eve of the plenum, Stalin summoned the leaders of the party apparatus. He warned that several people were to be withdrawn from the Central Committee. Zhukov instructed Zhdanov to submit a proposal for the withdrawal.

Personnel issues were considered immediately after the beginning of the plenum, on the evening of February 21, 1947. Zhdanov asked for the floor:

- I am making a proposal to remove Zhukov from the list of candidates for membership in the Central Committee. He, in my opinion, got into the Central Committee of the Party early, he was little prepared in the Party respect. I believe that Zhukov has no place among the candidates. A number of data show that Zhukov showed an anti-Party attitude. The members of the Central Committee are aware of this, and I think it would be expedient not to have him among the candidates for membership in the Central Committee.

Molotov, presiding at the plenum, asked:

Who wants to speak on this? There are no applicants. I vote. Who is for Comrade Zhdanov's proposal to exclude Zhukov from the list of candidates for members of the Central Committee - please raise your hands. Please drop it. Who is against? There is no such. Who abstained? There aren't any either. The proposal to exclude Zhukov from the list of candidates for membership in the Central Committee was approved unanimously.

Zhukov stood up, hesitated a little, then turned and walked out of the hall with a clear marching step. Marshal wrote a letter to Stalin, which began with the words: "The exclusion of me from the candidates of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks killed me."

Zhukov's position in Odessa was very difficult. Local authorities and political agencies behaved with him in the most offensive way. After Zhukov's departure, with the approval of Stalin, his dacha and apartment were searched. His daughter Era Zhukova recalled:

There were two searches that I remember very well. By the way, as a result of one of them,

my camera was stolen - a gift from my father. Then another search was at the apartment.

Abakumov reported to Stalin:

"In accordance with your instructions, a covert search was carried out at Zhukov's apartment in Moscow. The task was to find and seize a suitcase and a box with gold, diamonds and other valuables from Zhukov's apartment.

According to the conclusion of the workers who conducted the search, Zhukov's apartment gives the impression that everything that could compromise him was seized from there. Not only is there no suitcase with valuables, but there are even no letters, notes, etc.

Of course, they were looking not for a suitcase, but for some Zhukov's handwritten notes, who could help build a case against him.

Abakumov did not lose hope. Promised Stalin:

"A group of operatives of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR was sent to Odessa to carry out an unofficial search in Zhukov's apartment. I will let you know the results of this operation. additionally".

It ended with the marshal collapsing with a heart attack.

State Security General Boris Vasilievich Geraskin recalled how, on December 31, 1947, he, a young Chekist, was included in the task force, which was instructed to search the apartment of the former driver, Marshal Zhukov. The driver has already been arrested.

right in the garage of the Ministry of the Armed Forces. The driver's family lived in a barracks in Khamovniki. The wife, not knowing about her husband's arrest, was getting ready for the New Year, two children were playing on the floor...

Marshal Zhukov continued to persecute.

On January 20, 1948, the Central Committee "issued a final warning to Comrade Zhukov, giving him the last opportunity to correct himself and become an honest member of the party, worthy of a commander's rank."

The Minister of the Armed Forces Bulganin, by his order, removed Marshal Zhukov from the post of commander of the troops of the Odessa Military District and transferred him to the even less significant Ural Military District. It was a demonstration action for everyone to see: even Zhukov himself was punished!

Officers from his entourage were imprisoned so that the military leaders would not be mistaken: they say, since they won the war, now they can do anything.

"I was arrested on January 24, 1948 in Rostov without a warrant and taken to Moscow, to the internal prison of the MGB," recalled one of Zhukov's friends, Lieutenant General Konstantin Fedorovich Telegin. "They tore off my clothes, dressed me in torn clothes, pulled out the gold crowns along with my teeth. Minister of State Security Abakumov swore at me as an "enemy of the Motherland and the Party" and demanded that I confess to my "criminal work." Insulting and mocking, the investigators and the leadership of the MGB demanded that I testify about the "conspiracy" allegedly led by Zhukov, making it clear that he was also arrested."

Hero of the Soviet Union, Lieutenant General Vladimir Viktorovich Kryukov, who commanded the cavalry corps during the war, was very close to the marshal. He was imprisoned in September 1948. Following him, his wife, Lidia Andreevna Ruslanova, a wonderful performer of Russian folk songs, was arrested.

General Kryukov was brought to the Ministry of State Security.

The investigator immediately warned:

- You are no longer a general, but a prisoner, you will begin to lock yourself up, we will beat you like Sidorov's goat.

Kryukov objected:

- I am still under investigation, and I have not been demoted from the generals.

The investigator led him to the window and said:

- Do you see the people there? Here they are under investigation. And you're already convicted. There is no return from us to freedom. From us the road is only to the camp.

Kryukov was taken to the Minister of State Security Abakumov. The minister explained:

"If you persist, we will beat you and maim you for the rest of your life.

They accused Kryukov, like other arrested people, of participating in a conspiracy led by Marshal Zhukov. The general was beaten until he lost consciousness, demanding that he testify about Zhukov's betrayal. Kryukov was sentenced to 25 years. Following him, his wife, Lidia Andreevna Ruslanova, was sent to the camp.

And the leader continued to receive testimonies from the arrested military leaders, from which it followed that the marshal was conceited, politically unreliable, hostile to the party and Stalin. In total, about a hundred generals ended up behind bars in the Zhukov case. The Minister of State Security, Ignatiev, accepting the cases after the arrested Abakumov, asked Stalin:

– What to do with them? Maybe put them through the Special Meeting and send them to the camp?

The leader answered the minister through Beria. Ignatiev conscientiously wrote down - comrade Stalin, as Comrade Beria reported, said: let them sit still.

The generals were arrested only on the basis of wiretapping of their conversations. Therefore, they do not want to declassify their cases to this day. Arrests among Zhukov's entourage went on almost until Stalin's death. And the marshal understood on what a thin rope he was suspended.

But the question is: maybe Stalin had reason to be afraid of his generals?

Rebellion of General Gordov

The generals, who bravely fought in the Great Patriotic War, sat in the Lubyanka without trial or investigation for several years. Immediately after their arrest, they were intensively interrogated, knocking out the necessary testimony. And then it was like they forgot. They even stopped calling for interrogations. The one who arrested them, the former head of the Main Directorate of Counterintelligence Smersh, then Minister of State Security Abakumov, has already been imprisoned. And the generals languished behind bars, wondering why they were deprived of the right to serve their homeland. Most were lucky: soon the leader died, and they were released. But Stalin managed to shoot several people.

Among them was Colonel General Vasily Nikolaevich Gordov, Hero of the Soviet Union. Most of the destroyed military leaders either idolized the leader, or simply were not interested in the situation in the country. General Gordov directly blamed Stalin for the misfortunes of the country.

Vasily Nikolaevich Gordov fought back in the First World War, received the badge of a non-commissioned officer. He joined the Red Guard in December 1917. In the Civil, he rose to the rank of regiment commander. Graduated from the Frunze Academy. He met the Great Patriotic War as chief of staff of the 21st Army, in October 1941 he became its commander.

"Short in stature, rather dry than full, wiry, with graying hair cut short under a crew cut," one of his subordinates remembered him that way. - Black prickly eyes under massive black eyebrows with glimpses of gray hair pierced me

through".

His military fate was neither easy nor simple. And the tragedy of the beginning of the war did not bypass the general.

"I made my way out of the encirclement," Gordov told his wife, "with a handful of comrades, spending the night in a field, in a forest, with a bottle of alcohol I went on reconnaissance, I didn't eat bread for three days, I was exhausted to the limit, barely a soul in my body."

He wrote to his wife, who had been evacuated to Kuibyshev:

"Things, as you know, are not going well. Pogodin was killed, Mikulsky was killed, he was traveling with me in the same car ... I made inquiries about Tupikov, there was still a glimmer of hope, now it is gone: Vasily died ... And many were gone next to me. Spread about it, you understand, should not.

It's good that I managed to talk to you from Kharkov. Khrushchev asked if I had any contact with the family. What a connection! Khrushchev ordered to call you, and thirty minutes later I heard your voice. I almost burst into tears in front of all those present (Timoshenko, Khrushchev), I was so happy and hurt for the poor hearing and the cliffs through which your voice still broke through ... A lot has been experienced, but there is still more to go through. You have to win or die. It is better to win, my dear Nina and Pruha.

The daughter Ira, whom the general addressed, was an adopted child. The Gordovs did not have their own children for a long time, and they went to the orphanage. They chose a girl with a severe hereditary disease. The doctors responded. She suddenly held out her hands to them, and Gordov made a decision:

- We take.

Vasily Nikolaevich wrote to his daughter from the front:

"Daddy loves you and wants to come to you soon with a victory and play, walk with you. You're probably big and naughty by now. I am sending you a gift, chocolate and soap so that you do not get sick. I keep your bunny and will bring it back. Unfortunately, I don't send much chocolate. Let's take Berlin, then I'll send you a whole pood.

Listen to your mom and love your dad. Write to me, Irochka, and take care of your mother.

The fate of the girl was tragic. She caught a serious infectious disease, the weakened body did not have the strength to resist, and she burned out in just a day. For a long time his wife did not dare to inform Gordov. Still, she wrote. The orderly then said that the general became ill, he lost consciousness.

"I live now in a very intense work," Gordov wrote to his wife, "I had a big trouble: I flew on a U-2 and was shot down, remained unharmed, except for a small injury to my leg, so there's no need to talk about cheerfulness and gaiety."

In the midst of heavy fighting in the south of the country, the commander of the Stalingrad Front was needed. A member of the military council of the front, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, suggested Gordov, whom he considered energetic and brave. Major General Gordov was summoned to see Stalin. The leader liked commanders with a strong character and will. Stalin appointed him commander of the front and immediately promoted him to lieutenant general. Many years after the war, Marshal Zhukov recalled how he flew to Stalingrad: "Gordov's report made a favorable impression, one felt knowledge of the enemy, knowledge of his troops, and most importantly, faith in their combat capability."

Gordov was a tough but skilled military leader. He did not tolerate a lull, he longed for an offensive. For the Smolensk offensive operation in September 1943 he was promoted to colonel general. In April 1945 he received the "Gold Star" of the Hero of the Soviet Union. His army participated in the capture of Berlin, in the liberation of Prague.

Marshal Ivan Stepanovich Konev appointed General Gordov head of the Prague garrison. After returning to his homeland, he headed the Volga Military District. He was elected a deputy of the Supreme Council. And suddenly he was in disgrace.

Perhaps his troubles began with Kulik, whom the whole country once knew.

Marshal of the Soviet Union Grigory Ivanovich Kulik ended up near Tsaritsyn together with Stalin during the Civil War, which determined his fate. In the First Cavalry Army, under the command of Budyonny and Voroshilov, Kulik commanded artillery. And in the eyes of Stalin, Grigory Ivanovich was the number one artilleryman.

Under the pseudonym "General Cooper," Kulik went as chief military adviser to Republican Spain. After returning in the thirty-seventh, he received the Order of Lenin and headed the artillery of the Red Army. In January 1939, Stalin promoted him to deputy people's commissar of defense.

In January 1940, Kulik reported to Stalin about how unsuccessfully the fighting with Finland was unfolding. The leader arrogantly stopped him:

- You panic. I will send you a book on the basics of psychology. The Greek priests were smart people. Having received disturbing information, they went to take a bath, and

having bathed, assessed the events and then made decisions. A person gets different sensations through his organs - and different shit. There are also restraining centers, which are weak in Kulik. You need to discard all the garbage and decide on the basis of the main factors, and not influenced by the mood of the moment.

Marshal Kulik was right. The war with Finland cost a lot of blood. On March 21, 1940, he received the "Gold Star" of the Hero of the Soviet Union for the fact that large-caliber artillery broke into the Finnish fortifications and paved the way for the infantry.

On the very first day of the Great Patriotic War, Stalin sent Marshal Kulik to the Western Front. Grigory Ivanovich did not even notice how, together with units of the 3rd and 10th armies, he himself ended up in the German rear. He did not have a radio station, he could not report his whereabouts. Nobody knew where the marshal was. In the confusion and chaos, Kulik could not be found. Rumors spread that Marshal Kulik had gone over to the enemy. Stalin tore and metal. And the marshal, together with the soldiers of the 10th Army, went out to his own for almost two weeks. He rubbed his legs, could not walk, later told that at some point he was ready to shoot himself out of desperation. And yet, in July 1941, he crossed the Dnieper and ended up with his own people.

In other armies, those who get out of captivity are awarded for courage and endured suffering. But Stalin did not trust the encirclement, and his attitude towards Kulik changed.

Marshal Kulik was a mediocre military leader. But Stalin stubbornly trusted him one military post after another, and then became angry because of his failures and failures. Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Marshal Grigory Ivanovich Kulik and the head of the Main Political Directorate, army commissar 1st rank Lev Zakharovich Mekhlis are the two main figures who are usually held almost entirely responsible for the failures and defeats of the first period of the war. This happened because even during the war, Stalin publicly made them scapegoats.

In 1942, Kulik was stripped of his marshal's stars, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and all awards. Demoted to major general. Zhukov, who was indebted to him, stood up for Kulik, and it seemed that the disgrace was removed. But the military counterintelligence was now following the former marshal, and he, temperamental by nature, was unrestrained in his language. In his own circle, he spoke frankly.

On April 10, 1945, the famous military leader General of the Army Ivan Efimovich Petrov wrote a statement addressed to Stalin. Petrov accused Kulik of "carrying on conversations unworthy of a party member, consisting in praising the officers of the tsarist army, in the poor political education of Soviet officers, and in the incorrect placement of the higher personnel of the army."

After Stalin's death, General Petrov explained that Abakumov had ordered him to write this letter. The head of Smersh himself held conversations with two generals who knew Kulik well. A denunciation of Kulik was also written by Lieutenant General Georgy Fedorovich Zakharov.

Kulik later admitted:

"Petrov expressed his dissatisfaction with his removal from the post of commander of the 4th Ukrainian Front. As Petrov said, the Headquarters worked for him - the honored general - because he allowed himself to take furniture and other property out of Romania for personal use. Under the tsarist regime, according to Petrov, such a charge would not have been brought against the general.

Zakharov, who lived on the floor below, invited us to move into his apartment. After talking, I began to complain about the unfair, in my opinion, Stalin's attitude towards me. In this connection, I stated that the government was expelling the best commanding cadres from the Red Army and replacing them with political workers who were ignorant of military affairs. Of the main military workers in the leadership of the army, only Zhukov remained, but he was also "rejected". I raised a toast to Zhukov."

The role of political workers in the army caused dissatisfaction with the more loyal generals. And then three offended generals gathered at once! All three did not have a military fate, the number of falls exceeded the number of ups.

Stalin was informed about the conversation of the three generals, since the drunken military leaders dared to criticize the leader's personnel policy. Kulik was expelled from the party with the wording "as morally and politically corrupt". In July, forty-fifth Kulik was appointed deputy commander of the Volga Military District. And General Gordov became the commander. He behaved like a decent person - instead of shunning the disgraced general, he treated him in a comradely manner.

A year later, on June 28, 1946, Major General Kulik was retired from the armed forces. The worst was yet to come. The investigation into his case was in full swing. They remembered that Zhukov was busy with him. Now it was a crime.

But Grigory Ivanovich Kulik did not suspect anything and made an irreparable mistake. Once in Moscow, he met with his former commander, Gordov. Recent colleagues settled in a hotel room and drank heavily. They remembered the war, started talking about Stalin, about Zhukov ...

Naive people in a certain sense, they did not even suspect that they were being followed. Maybe they thought that retirees were of no interest to anyone?

The hotel room where the generals met, speaking the KGB language, was equipped with technical means of control. Specialists also recorded Gordov's conversations with another of his former subordinates, Major General Philip Trofimovich Rybalchenko, who after the war served as chief of staff of the Volga Military District. Three generals from one district is already a conspiracy.

Listening equipment was also installed in the apartment of Vasily Nikolaevich Gordov. Chekists heard everything they wanted. On January 3, 1947, the Minister of State Security, Colonel General Abakumov, reported to Stalin:

"At the same time, I present a certificate of Gordov's conversation with his wife, recorded by operational equipment on December 31, 1946, and a certificate of Gordov's conversation with Rybalchenko on December 28. From these conversations it is clear that Gordov and Rybalchenko are clear enemies of the Soviet regime.

Abakumov's note meant a death sentence for the generals.

What did Hero of the Soviet Union Gordov say to his wife so terrible?

Vasily Nikolaevich spoke about Marshal Zhukov, who had just been removed from his post:

- You keep saying - go to Stalin. What did this person do? Ruined Russia, because Russia is no more! So, go to him and say: "I'm sorry, I made a mistake, I will honestly serve you, faithfully." To whom? I will honestly serve meanness, savagery? I can't be dishonest, it's not in my blood. The Inquisition is solid, people just die. Now they are clearing those who Zhukov had more or less trust. They are removed. And Zhukov will be supported for a year or two, and then, too ... I did not take into account a lot. What did I break my head on? On what such people broke - Uborevich, Tukhachevsky ...

"When Zhukov was removed, you immediately told me: everything was dead," my wife reminded me. - Notes I must agree that you are largely to blame.

- So, I had to tremble, slavishly tremble, so that they would give me the position of commander, so that they would give bread to me and my family? I can not! What ruined me was that I was elected as a deputy. This is where my death lies. I went around the districts, and when I saw all this, all this terrible, then I was completely reborn. I couldn't look at it. From here my moods began, I began to express them to you, to someone else, and it went like a platform. I am now saying, I have such convictions that if collective farms are removed today, then tomorrow there will be order, there will be a market, everything will be fine. Let people live, they have the right to life, they have won life for themselves, they defended it!

At the end of 1946, a severe famine began in the country. The collective farmers themselves were blamed for everything, "squandering the state bread." Nearly ten thousand chairmen of collective farms were imprisoned. On September 16, 1946, due to drought and crop failure, the prices of goods that were sold on cards were raised. On September 27, a new decree "On Savings in the Spending of Bread" appeared - it reduced the number of people who received cards

for food. Losing cards was a heavy blow.

Filipp Rybalchenko, who came to visit Gordov, stopped at his apartment, and they again had a heart-to-heart talk. The generals' conversations testify to the fact that at that time there were people who understood what was happening in the country and did not want to put up with it.

"We don't have the essentials," Rybalchenko said bitterly. - They literally became beggars. Only the government lives, and the broad masses are begging. I'm surprised that Stalin really does not see how people live.

"He sees everything, knows everything," Gordov snapped.

- Or is he so confused that he doesn't know how to get out?.. Outwardly, the people do not show their discontent anywhere, outwardly everything is in order, and the people are dying ... The people are starving like dogs, the people are very dissatisfied.

But the people are silent, afraid.

- And no prospects, complete isolation.

"We need to have real democracy," said Gordov.

"Exactly, pure, real democracy," agreed Rybalchenko.

In January 1947, Stalin was the first to allow the arrest of Rybalchenko. Then they took Kulik and Gordov. They were charged with "creating a conspiratorial group to fight the Soviet government on the basis of common anti-Soviet views."

The indictment stated: "Gordov is accused of treason. Being an enemy of the Soviet government, he strove for the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and, together with his accomplices, expressed threats against the leaders of the party and government, made vicious attacks against the head of the Soviet government.

The Chekists attributed to the three generals at the same time an exaggerated assessment of Zhukov's role in the war. The military collegium of the Supreme Court considered the case of former Marshal Kulik and former generals Gordov and Rybalchenko on August 23, 1950. Grigory Ivanovich refused the testimony given during the investigation - he was beaten during interrogations. The judges didn't care. The verdict was pronounced in advance: guilty of treason.

On August 24, Kulik, Gordov and Rybalchenko were shot.

All the years in power, Stalin was mortally afraid of a general's rebellion. Did he have reason to fear officers like Gordov? Vasily Nikolaevich was not going to arrange a military coup. But he was a real patriot, he understood what Stalin was doing, and his soul ached for the country.

Line seven

Changing of the Guard

What to do with Lavrenty Pavlovich?

The leader also looked at Beria. The predecessors of Lavrenty Pavlovich - Yagoda and Yezhov - have long gone to another world. Beria somehow lingered in power.

Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria was born on March 29, 1899 in the mountain village of Merkheuli, Sukhumi region of Abkhazia, into a peasant family. Lost his father early. He grew up in the arms of his mother, who earned money by sewing. As the best student, he went to study with the money of his fellow villagers. In 1919 he graduated from the Baku Secondary Mechanical and Construction Technical School (specialty - hydraulic engineer) and studied at the Polytechnic Institute for another two years. Quite a high educational level for the party-Chekist cadres of that time.

People who were interested in his fate say that he loved music, sang, and was interested in architecture. But a career in those days could only be made in
politics.

In 1918-1919, he worked in Georgia and Azerbaijan as a trainee in the head office of the Nobel oil company, as a technician in the hydraulic engineering detachment. Stayed in Baku

when Turkish troops entered the city. He was hired as a clerk at the plant "Caspian partnership" White City ". He joined the Bolsheviks and quickly became involved in political activities. By nature, he took up a very delicate, not to say doubtful, business: on the instructions of his comrades, he penetrated the counterintelligence of independent Azerbaijan, where from 1918 to the spring of 1920 the Musavat (Equality) party was in power.

From the autumn of 1919 to March 1920, Beria served as an agent of the Organization for the Fight against Counter-Revolution (counterintelligence) under the State Defense Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Subsequently, he explained that he was fulfilling the task of the Gummet (Energy) party, which united Azerbaijani social democrats headed by Nariman Narimanov and close to the Bolsheviks. In 1920, Gummet joined the Communist Party of Azerbaijan.

The party comrades were embarrassed by this story, as can be judged from the letter that Beria wrote to Moscow in 1933 from Tiflis to Sergo Ordzhonikidze, at that time one of the most influential people in the country. In the twenties, Ordzhonikidze was the first secretary of the Transcaucasian Regional Committee, that is, he led three republics at once - Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. In 1926, Stalin transferred Sergo Ordzhonikidze to Moscow, but he was considered the curator of the Transcaucasus.

On several pages, Beria reports on his work, reports that he has found work for Sergo's brother - Papulia, and only then does he move on to the main thing:

"Levan Gogoberidze (First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. - *Auth.*). According to the stories of a number of comrades, Comrade Gogoberidze is spreading the most vile things about me. In particular, about my past work in Musavat intelligence, he claims that the party allegedly did not know about this and does not know.

Meanwhile, you are well aware that I was sent to Musavat intelligence by the party and that this issue was dealt with in the Central Committee of the AKP (b) in 1920 in the presence of you, comrade Stasova, Kaminsky, Mirza Davud Huseynov, Narimanov, Sarkis, Ruhulla Akhundov, Buniat -Zade and others. In 1925, I gave you an official extract about the decision of the Central Committee of the AKP (b) on this issue, by which I was completely rehabilitated, since the fact of my work in counterintelligence with the knowledge of the party was confirmed by the statements of Comrades. Mirza Davud Huseynova, Kasum Izmailova and others."

In those days when Ordzhonikidze was on Olympus, and Beria was just starting his career, he confessed his love to his high boss: "Sergo, I have no one but you. You are more than a father to me, brother. I breathe and live with you. And to let you down - I'm not capable, I'd rather put a bullet in my head than not justify your to me relationship".

Then they will say that Beria worked for the Musavatists, and, consequently, for the British. But no documents on this score were found even in those days when they were searched for in all the archives in order to more reliably cover up Beria. Lavrenty Pavlovich has always served one authority.

In Soviet Azerbaijan, he worked as the manager of the affairs of the Central Committee of the party, the executive secretary of the Republican Extraordinary Commission for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the improvement of the life of workers. In April 1921, as an experienced underground worker, he found himself at work in the Cheka. Being a literate person, having a quick reaction and an extraordinary mind, he began to make a career. There are only promotions on his track record.

He started as deputy head of the secret operational department of the Azerbaijan Cheka, and a month later he headed the secret operational unit and immediately became deputy chairman of the republican Cheka. In November 1922, he was transferred to the same position in the Georgian Cheka. He worked in this position for four years, until in December 1926 he became deputy chairman of the Transcaucasian Cheka, the body that was in charge of the state security of the three republics: Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. In parallel, he headed the GPU of Georgia and received the post of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the republic.

At the beginning of 1931, Beria headed the Transcaucasian GPU, became the head of a special department of the Caucasian Red Banner Army and the authorized representative of the OGPU in the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. This means that the high authorities in Moscow liked him and they put him in charge of the work of the Chekists of the three republics.

In the same year, Beria was transferred to party work - the second secretary of the Transcaucasian Regional Committee and at the same time the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia and the Tbilisi City Committee.

The Transcaucasian Federation, which united Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, existed from 1922 to 1936. The party leadership of the republics was constantly in conflict with each other, and Beria was not a cooperator in these intrigues, although it was he who emerged victorious from this squabble. On October 9, 1932, Mamia Orakhelashvili, the first secretary of the Transcaucasian regional committee, was removed. A week later, this post was taken by Lavrenty Pavlovich. But Beria's way up was not simple and easy. The party elite lived in a world of intrigue, where everyone hated each other and united against a successful ally.

On December 18, 1932, an alarmed Beria wrote to Ordzhonikidze from Sukhumi:

"Dear Sergo!

I know that there are many talkers from among those who left the Transcaucasus, it is impossible to forbid talking nonsense, I know that there are many rumors about me and our current work in the Transcaucasus ... Dear Sergo, you have known me for more than ten years. You know all my shortcomings, you know what I'm capable of. I have never let down either the Central Committee or you, and I am convinced that I will not let you down in the future either. I devote all my time to work, wishing to justify the confidence in me of the party and the Central Committee; for four years I have not taken advantage of my vacation, not finding it possible to break away from business. Now I am in Abkhazia, clicking on T

I ask only one thing: do not trust anyone. Don't trust me either without checking what I say and do. Check, and you will see for yourself how false and vile those insinuations with which they are trying to denigrate me in your eyes.

The life of Sergo Ordzhonikidze ended tragically. He shot himself on February 18, 1937. There is no reliable evidence as to what exactly happened that day. So it will remain unknown: Ordzhonikidze himself shot himself or ... According to rumors, he committed suicide as a result of a sharp conflict with Stalin. He tried to the last to save industry from repression, to save engineering personnel.

After Sergo's death, his older brother was shot. Two other brothers and a widow were imprisoned. It can be assumed that such a fate awaited him. Once Beria swore to Sergo in eternal friendship. But those words meant nothing to him.

One of the people closest to Beria, Amayak Zakharovich Kobulov, who was appointed People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan, went to Moscow during the war with the head of his economic department. The train stopped at a station. The oncoming train was driven by a steam locomotive of the CO series, that is, named after Sergo Ordzhonikidze.

Kobulov and his subordinate were standing in the carriage by the window. Head of HOZU said:

- How much Sergo did for the Soviet state. Left a good memory.

"What he did or didn't do is not important," said Amayak Kobulov. But if he hadn't died, he would have been arrested. There was a whole pile of materials on it ...

Lavrenty Pavlovich owed his career not to high patrons, but to his talents. It would be absurd to underestimate his natural talents.

He was ugly, wore pince-nez - then it was a rarity. His eyes were piercing, hawkish. His self-confidence, inner strength, some obscure magnetism were striking. This is how Nami Mikoyan, the daughter-in-law of Anastas Ivanovich, remembered him.

It seems that he was always driven by the desire to advance, to become the first at any cost. He swam the farthest in rough seas, he was the best at volleyball. God knows what he would become

in another era ... There was something adventurous in his character! The desire for power, the desire to command others.

In 1922, he met his future wife, Nina Teimurazovna Gegechkori, a noble daughter. In 1917, her father was killed, the girl was brought up by her cousin. The first child of the Beria couple died. The second - Sergo Lavrentievich - will become a rocket systems designer. Before the war, Nina Beria entered the graduate school of the Timiryazev Academy in Moscow, defended her dissertation, and received the degree of candidate of agricultural sciences. After the war, she began to improve, her husband regularly sent her to be treated in the now socialist Czechoslovakia, in Karlsbad (now Karlovy Vary).

Beria's all-Union glory began with a report he read in Tbilisi and later published as a separate book: "On the History of the Bolshevik Organizations in Transcaucasia", where Stalin's role in the revolutionary movement was inflated to mythological proportions. But the skillfully composed report was not the only achievement of Beria. The talk that Lavrenty Pavlovich seduced the leader, playing on the secret strings of his soul, does not correspond to reality.

He proved to be a reliable administrator, able to complete the task at any cost. And Stalin appreciated the exact execution of his orders. People who failed due to incompetence or because they thought it unthinkable to pay too high a price - sometimes in human lives - he did not work for a long time. Beria showed himself to be a devoted man - in the summer of 1933, when an assassination attempt was allegedly made on Stalin, who was vacationing in Abkhazia. Beria shouted loudly:

Let's protect the leader!

And covered Stalin. And who fired, and remained unknown, because the man who was lying on the shore with a light machine gun, the guards tore to pieces. Beria was a great master of all kinds of intrigues.

Sometimes it seems that Stalin trusted Beria because they are both from Georgia. There are two mistakes in this assumption at once: firstly, Stalin did not trust Beria either, and secondly, Stalin's nationality was of little interest.

If Sergo Ordzhonikidze had not committed suicide, they would have got rid of him in a different way. There were no other people from the Caucasus next to the general secretary, except for Mikoyan, and he was never close to Stalin. Similarly, the nationality of Stalin and Beria did not mean any concessions for Georgia.

Beria diligently built relationships with influential Moscow people. Many, taking advantage of the invitation of Lavrenty Pavlovich, visited Tiflis or Sukhumi and were convinced of what an amiable, caring and hospitable host he was. Lavrenty Pavlovich knew how to have fun and preferred to do it in a large company, so he had no shortage of friends.

"I liked Beria: a simple and witty man," recalled Nikita Khrushchev, who met him in the early thirties. "At the plenums of the Central Committee, we most often sat side by side, exchanged opinions, and on other occasions scoffed at the speaker."

In the role of the leader of Georgia and the entire Transcaucasus, Beria did not depart from the KGB work. Sometimes he came to interrogate the detainees himself. He interrogated those who had recently been his boss. Enjoyed. Colonel Sardon Nikolaevich Nadaraya, who will head Beria's guards, was at that time the head of the internal prison of the NKVD of Georgia. In 1953, he described what was going on there:

"The arrested were beaten systematically and very severely – with belts, ropes and sticks. The detainees were abused. For several days they were forced to stand with a heavy load, until the arrested person, exhausted, fell down ... Many of those arrested were put in a cold, damp punishment cell for a long time and starved. Often, those arrested were beaten to the point that they later died.

Another subordinate of Beria, Colonel Konstantin Sergeevich Savitsky, confirmed:

- On the letterheads of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Georgia, Beria wrote the names of the people who should be arrested. Personally, I myself saw memos with the following text: "Arrest such and such and thoroughly interrogate." The word "hard" was underlined. In particular, I saw such a note in relation to the former secretary of the Komsomol committee of the NKVD of Georgia, Mikhail Aslamazov. The investigation into his case was conducted by Kovalchuk, who interrogated Aslamazov so "hard" that he, unable to withstand the beatings, jumped out of the window and fell to his death.

Mikhail Grigoryevich Aslamazov - the legendary striker of Dynamo Tbilisi - headed the Komsomol organization of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Sports glory did not save him. He was arrested on December 1, 1937. After the 20th Party Congress, the widow was informed that "Mikhail Grigoryevich Aslamazov has been rehabilitated." And only four decades later, the family found out that he had not been tried. Two weeks after his arrest, he threw himself out of the window of the investigator's office on the fourth floor of the Georgian NKVD building.

The investigator who tormented him - Nikolai Kuzmich Kovalchuk - went far. He studied at school for only four years and for a very short time at an evening communist university under the NKVD party committee, but the lack of education did not interfere: before the war, he led the investigative unit in the Leningrad department of the NKVD. He spent the Great Patriotic War in military counterintelligence. After the war, Lieutenant General Kovalchuk became the Minister of State Security in Ukraine, then he gave advice to the Polish comrades.

Becoming the first secretary of the Transcaucasian Regional Committee, Beria often traveled to Moscow. He stayed at the Select Hotel, then he was given an apartment on Samotechnaya Square. Almost every evening he was summoned to see Stalin.

Khrushchev told how exactly Beria was transferred to Moscow. Stalin casually remarked:

- It would be necessary to reinforce the NKVD, help Comrade Yezhov, provide him with a deputy.

And he turned to Nikolai Ivanovich:

- Who do you want to be deputy?

He replied:

- If necessary, give me Malenkov.

Stalin knew how to pause in conversation, as if considering the answer.

- Yes, of course, Malenkov would be good, but we cannot give Malenkov. Malenkov is sitting on the cadres in the Central Committee, and now a new question will arise: who should be appointed there? It is not so easy to find a person who would be in charge of personnel, and even in the Central Committee. Much time will pass before he studies and recognizes the footage.

This is where the conversation ended. And after some time, he again put the same question before Yezhov:

- Whom to give you as deputies?

This time Yezhov did not name anyone. Then Stalin himself suggested:

- And how do you look if they give you Beria as your deputy?

Beria was there, in Stalin's office.

Yezhov started up, but restrained himself and answered:

- This is a good candidate. Of course, Comrade Beria can work and not only deputy. He may also be a drug addict.

Beria and Yezhov were friends. One Sunday, Yezhov invited Khrushchev and Malenkov to his dacha, and Beria was also there. When Lavrenty Pavlovich came to Moscow, he always stayed with Nikolai Ivanovich ...

Stalin dryly replied:

- No, Beria is not suitable for the people's commissar, but you will have a good deputy.

And then he dictated a draft resolution to Molotov.

Khrushchev, after the meeting, approached Beria and congratulated him. He replied:

I don't accept your congratulations.

- Why?

- You did not agree when you were expected to be a deputy to Molotov. So why should I be glad that I was appointed deputy to Yezhov? It would be better for me to stay in Georgia.

Beria's appointment to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs was, apparently, an unpleasant surprise for him. He headed a large party organization and could count on a post in the Central Committee, and not in the branch people's commissariat. Leaving party work looked like a demotion. Moreover, he was not even approved by the people's commissar, but only by the first deputy, although they probably hinted that the appointment was promising.

In historical literature, there is such a version that Yezhov, having learned who was assigned to him as a grave digger, tried to delay the execution - he gave the order to arrest Beria. The encryption was received by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Georgia Sergey Goglidze. But he did not comply with the order to take the first secretary into custody, but showed Beria's encryption. He urgently flew to Moscow, made his way to Stalin and begged for his life. This is nothing more than an anecdote. Yezhov never showed self-will. And the people's commissar had no right to issue a warrant for the arrest of Beria: the first secretaries of the Central Committee of the national republics were taken only with the sanction of the Politburo, that is, Stalin.

On August 22, 1938, Beria was approved as the First Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR. He sat down at the Lubyanka to delve into the affairs and deal with the personnel. He knew that he, like all his predecessors, would have to start with a purge of the leadership apparatus.

He was given the special rank of state security commissioner of the first rank (this was equivalent to the army rank of army general). A month later, on September 29, he was appointed part-time head of the Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD. This department included all operational departments, including the Politburo security service. Ezhov formally still remained a people's commissar, and Stalin did not want any unpleasant surprises.

Beria brought his team with him. I will name just a few.

Vladimir Georgievich Dekanozov worked with him at the GPU of Georgia. Beria made him secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia for transport, then the people's commissar of the food industry of Georgia and, finally, the chairman of the republican State Planning Committee. In the NKVD, he headed the 3rd (counterintelligence) and 5th (special) departments of the NKVD GUGB. In the summer of 1940, he put things in order in Lithuania, which was annexed to the Soviet Union after an agreement with Hitler. In May 1939 he was appointed Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, from November 1940 - Ambassador to Germany.

Bogdan Zakharovich Kobulov also worked with Beria in the GPU of Georgia. At the Lubyanka, he quickly rose to the rank of First Deputy People's Commissar. He was perhaps the closest person to Lavrenty Pavlovich. Kobulov walked along the corridors of the Lubyanka in one shirt with rolled up sleeves, his huge belly swaying. Everyone who walked towards them huddled in fear against the wall. His brother Amayak will also take high positions in the people's commissariat.

Vsevolod Nikolayevich Merkulov has been working with Beria since 1922. In 1941 he will become People's Commissar of State Security of the USSR.

Lieutenant General Stepan Solomonovich Mamulov has been working with Beria since the early twenties. He was at party work for more than ten years, in the mid-thirties he became the secretary of the Tbilisi City Committee, and was in charge of the agricultural department of the Central Committee of Georgia. Beria took him to Moscow, first made him head of the NKVD secretariat, and then deputy minister of internal affairs ...

For three months, Beria took cases at the Lubyanka, and on November 25, 1938, he was approved by the people's commissar and carried out a massive purge. In 1939, 7372 people were fired from the state security agencies - every fifth operational worker! The apparatus was half renewed: fourteen and a half thousand people were taken to operational positions, the absolute majority from the party and Komsomol apparatus.

Beria replaced three-quarters of the senior officials of the state security. The Chekist apparatus has grown younger. The ethnic composition of the leadership has changed. The Poles are gone

Latvians, Germans - representatives of "foreign nationalities", as they said then; the number of Jews dropped sharply. Beria broke up with the Chekists, who in their youth were in some other parties - they were Socialist-Revolutionaries or anarchists - or belonged to hostile classes, that is, they were not born in proletarian families.

Beria was appointed People's Commissar of Internal Affairs at the very end of 1938. And at the beginning of the forty-first People's Commissariat was divided into two - state security and internal affairs. Intelligence, counterintelligence, all operational departments were transferred to the NKGB, headed by Vsevolod Nikolaevich Merkulov.

What did it mean?

Stalin actually pushed Beria away from state security.

Lavrenty Pavlovich remained People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. The police, fire protection, border, internal and escort troops, as well as the Main Directorate of Camps were subordinate to him. At the same time, he became deputy chairman of the government. He oversaw the people's commissariats of the timber industry, non-ferrous metallurgy, the oil industry and the river fleet ... He was increasingly involved in economic affairs, widely using convicts - gratuitous and dumb labor.

With the outbreak of war, the two people's commissariats were again united, headed by Beria. However, in the forty-third, the NKVD was again divided, and again Beria was left with the Gulag and firefighters. Military counterintelligence was singled out as an independent structure directly subordinate to Stalin. The leader constantly changed the structure of organs, rearranged people; this meant that he was not satisfied with both the work of the state security and its leadership, that is, Beria.

Beria did not like and was afraid of Stalin, although he raised Lavrenty Pavlovich high, and in presidiums, and at the dinner table he sat next to him.

"At banquets in the Kremlin," recalled the leader's interpreter Valentin Mikhailovich Berezhkov, "they usually sat at the table in the following order: Stalin sat in the middle, the main guest on his right hand, then the interpreter, and Beria to his right."

He hardly ate. But in front of him they put a plate with small red peppers, which he tossed into his mouth one by one, like seeds. Taught:

- It is very useful. Every man should eat a plate of such pepper every day," Beria said instructively.

Aleksey Ivanovich Adzhubey, Khrushchev's son-in-law, said that during Stalin's feasts at the "near" dacha, Stalin appointed Beria toastmaster, calling him for some reason a prosecutor. The leader liked to watch how Beria soldered the members of the Politburo, mocks them.

Alexey Adzhubey heard Lavrenty Pavlovich's speech at a solemn meeting dedicated to the next anniversary of October. Plump, with a puffy, flabby face, he looked like an ordinary employee. His clothes were baggy. But he spoke well, almost without an accent, clearly and authoritatively. He skillfully kept pauses, tossed his head, waiting for applause. His report was written in an unconventional way.

In September 1945, an operational bureau of the government was formed, consisting of: Beria (chairman), Malenkov (deputy), Mikoyan, Kaganovich, Voznesensky, Kosygin. Beria was at the head of the entire industry of the country. But by the end of the year, Stalin's mood had changed. Lavrenty Pavlovich lost the key position of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. And this was a signal that at the next turn, Beria could follow his predecessors into oblivion.

Stalin removed Beria from the Lubyanka. But he was feared and hated. But Beria was not afraid of anyone and despised everyone. He radiated a formidable, merciless authority. At the same time, he had no relation to the state security agencies for a long time.

Professor Vladimir Pavlovich Naumov, a former party worker, secretary of the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repressions under the President of Russia, one of the best experts on the Stalinist period, who analyzed the personal documents of the leader, said:

- Researchers are misled by the fact that Stalin instructed Beria to convey this or that

another indication to Abakumov or Ignatiev. In reality, the same Ignatiev knew in advance what Beria would tell him, what the conversation would be about. After all, Stalin met with the Minister of State Security more often than with members of the Politburo. But such was the ritual, and Ignatiev carefully wrote down: "Comrade called. Beria, conveyed the words of Comrade. Stalin - in such and such a case, the accused should be sentenced to capital punishment.

The conversations between Beria and Ignatiev were recorded and reported to Stalin so that it would be easier for him to understand what kind of relationship they had. Beria was checked and hoped to be caught on a careless word. He knew it. Therefore, several times Ignatiev noted that "on this subject, Comrade. Beria refused to talk."

Stalin removed Beria from the Lubyanka, but used him as a scarecrow. Beria, no longer in charge, personified the punitive organs. Lavrenty Pavlovich understood that his cruelty was approved by Stalin. The leader had a low opinion of his comrades-in-arms, believed that party comrades could show softness - everyone except Beria, a decisive and adventurous person.

Why did Stalin appreciate Beria?

Professor Vladimir Naumov:

- A reliable and ruthless person. Iosif Vissarionovich entrusted the bloody deeds to Beria, he knew that his hand would not falter. But Stalin prepared for him a change in the state security organs. As for the atomic and rocket affairs, they were established, and Beria was no longer so needed. Moreover, Stalin was afraid of him.

Admiral Ivan Stepanovich Isakov told Konstantin Simonov how he once had the honor of dining with Stalin in the Kremlin. They walked along the long Kremlin corridors. At every turn there are NKVD officers. Suddenly Stalin said:

Did you notice how many there are? Every time you walk along the corridor and think: which one of them? If this one here, it will shoot in the back, and if you turn the corner, the next one will shoot in the face. So you walk past them along the corridor and think ...

I asked Professor Naumov:

- So, Stalin thought that Beria could take a chance?

He considered him an adventurous person who could do anything. And Beria felt that the ring around him was shrinking.

- Did Beria realize what awaited him?

- Certainly! Other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee also walked under the ax, but each had some hope that the leader would have mercy. Beria hoped only that Stalin would pass away before he had time to imprison him.

Kaganovich will say later:

- Beria told us that if Stalin tried to arrest him, the Chekists arranged an uprising...

In this, of course, he was greatly mistaken. But the comrades in the Presidium of the Central Committee will remember his words. That is why in June 1953 they would not risk simply removing Beria from office, but would arrest him. They want to protect themselves...

In the depths of the Georgian Ministry of State Security, with the sanction of Stalin, the case of the "Mingrelian nationalist group" headed by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, Mikhail Ivanovich Baramia, matured. He went very young along the party line, supported by Beria, at the age of thirty-eight he became the second secretary of the Central Committee in Tbilisi. He never forgot his patron, he defended his dissertation "The outstanding role of L.P. Beria in the defense of the Caucasus.

When Stalin was vacationing in Georgia in the autumn of 1951, the Minister of State Security of Georgia, Lieutenant-General Nikolai Maksimovich Rukhadze, reported to him that the reason for the shortcomings in the republic was the actions of a group of Mingrelian nationalists. This angered the leader. On November 9, 1951, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks adopted a resolution "On bribery in Georgia and on Comrade Baramia's anti-party group," which stated that bribery is flourishing in the republic. And there is no fight against him, because "inside the apparatus of the Central Committee a

The government has a group of people who patronize bribe-takers and try to help them out by all means. The facts show that this group is headed by Comrade Baramia, Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. This group consists of Mingrelian nationalists."

Bribery was only an excuse for the main, political, accusation:

"The Mingrelian nationalist group of Comrade Baramia, however, is not limited, however, to the goal of protecting bribe-takers from the Mingrelians. She pursues another goal - seize the most important posts in the party and state apparatus of Georgia and nominate the Mingrelians for them ... It is characteristic that the most important posts in the Ministry of Justice, in the Prosecutor's Office and the Bar are in the hands of the Mingrelians. It is also characteristic that very important posts both in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Georgia and in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Georgian Komsomol are in the hands of the Mingrelians ... Among those selected, a significant number represent anti-party and anti-state people who harm the party and the state.

The decision was clearly dictated by the leader himself, as evidenced by not very competent style and vocabulary unusual for such a document:

"Several years ago, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Georgia decided, and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks confirmed, to remove Comrade Rapava from the post of Minister of State Security, who clogged the apparatus of the ministry with unfit elements from Mingrelians from the region where Comrade Rapava himself comes from.

T. Rapava was replaced by another minister, comrade Rukhadze, who was instructed to clean the state security apparatus of unusable elements and improve it. Workers from all provinces of Georgia were among those cleared. But the "chief" of the Mingrelians, comrade Baramia, decided that "injustice" had been committed against the Mingrelians.

And he started a struggle for the restoration of the Mingrelians in the state security apparatus. True, the Central Committee of the CP(b) of Georgia rejected his protest. But Comrade Baramia would not have been Baramia if he had been satisfied with the decision of the Central Committee. He galloped to Moscow, saluted the Moscow workers there in the name of the Central Committee of the CP(b) of Georgia, abused the confidence of the Moscow workers in the Central Committee of the CP(b) of Georgia, and nevertheless succeeded in reinstating clearly unfit workers in the state security apparatus of Georgia.

Ten employees of the central apparatus of the MGB of the USSR were sent to Tbilisi under the command of Colonel Viktor Georgievich Tsepkov, deputy head of the investigative unit for especially important cases. Mikhail Baramia was arrested. He was not beaten, but was not allowed to sleep, demanding to name the members of "the nationalist group he headed." The former minister Rapava was also interrogated: "They let me sleep no more than an hour a day. I, sitting on the bed, began to doze, then the bed was overturned and everything was taken out of the cell: a stool, a bedside table, a dustbin, so that I had nothing to sit on and doze off.

"I am not a fool to say upon arrival in Moscow that the materials regarding Rapava were not confirmed," said the head of the investigation team, Colonel Tsepkov. -

Ordered to take evidence. Consider that your denial of guilt also indicates that you continue to act against the Central Committee even now.

Stalin called Tbilisi, demanded a report on the progress of the investigation, ordered that interrogation protocols be sent to him, expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the investigators had not yet obtained recognition of those arrested as working for foreign intelligence.

Another notable arrest was Pyotr Afanasyevich Sharia, who was very close to Beria, and by that time had been elected to the Georgian Academy of Sciences.

Pyotr Sharia stood out among Beria's entourage. He interspersed the Chekist service and party work with philosophy and teaching. He defended his doctoral dissertation, received the title of professor, and headed the department of dialectical materialism in Moscow and Tbilisi institutes. In March 1934, Beria invited him to his office in the Transcaucasian Regional Committee for the post of head of the department of culture and propaganda. He made the director of the republican branch of the Marx-Engels Institute -

Lenin - Stalin.

Lavrenty Pavlovich distinguished him, invited him home and to the dacha. Sharia was one of those who, with sincere sadness, saw off Beria, who was transferred to Moscow. In December 1938, Lavrenty Pavlovich summoned him and offered him the position of head of the secretariat of the NKVD of the USSR. Philosopher Sharia became the 3rd rank state security commissioner, deputy chief of foreign intelligence. Beria appreciated his ability to write and edit documents. Whenever he had to make a big speech, he included Sharia in the brigade of "clerks".

After the division of the unified NKVD into two people's commissariats, Sharia was returned to Georgia - Secretary of the Republican Central Committee for Propaganda and Agitation. He suffered a misfortune - he lost his son. Deeply worried, he wrote a whole poem about his torment. I printed it in the form of a booklet with a circulation of 75 copies, which I gave to friends. When he fell out of favor, this little book was blamed on him.

On May 28, 1948, the first secretary of the Central Committee of Georgia, Kandid Nesterovich Charkviani, wrote to Stalin: "Having familiarized myself with the book of Comrade Sharia, I was amazed by its content. This work is thoroughly imbued with a religious and mystical worldview, up to the recognition of the immortality of the soul and the reality of the afterlife. Comrade Sharia explains the very fact of writing this book by his difficult mental state and moral breakdown caused by the death of his son, to whom he was especially attached. Knowing Comrade Shariy as an educated Marxist and an old member of the party, we did not imagine that he was capable, even under the influence of mental depression, how he tries to explain his act, to move away from the basic principles of the Bolshevik ideology.

Mental suffering due to the death of his son was not forgiven him. They called the publication of an "ideologically harmful book in verse" a gross political mistake, testifying to its "ideological instability." On May 31, Stalin approved the decision of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Georgia: to dismiss Sharia from the post of Secretary of the Central Committee for Propaganda, remove him from the Bureau and announce a reprimand with entry on the registration card.

He was allowed to teach at the Faculty of Philosophy of Tbilisi University. On February 19, 1952, Sharia was arrested as a member of the "Mingrelian nationalist group."

They imprisoned the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic, Lieutenant General Avksenty Narikiyevich Rapava, his Deputy Major General Konstantin Pavlovich Bziava, and the Prosecutor of the Republic, Vladimir Yakovlevich Shonia. Following them, several hundred party workers of Mingrelian origin were arrested - secretaries of city committees and district committees. More than ten thousand people were evicted to Kazakhstan. For a small republic, a big purge.

On March 27, 1952, Stalin signed a new resolution of the Politburo on the state of affairs in the Communist Party of Georgia. He ordered the removal of the first secretary Kandid Charkviani, who replaced Lavrenty Pavlovich in this position and was considered his nominee. And he ordered to appoint Akaky Ivanovich Mgeladze (before that first secretary of the Kutaisi regional committee) as the new owner of the republic.

Those arrested in this case were accused of intending to liquidate Soviet power in Georgia with the help of American intelligence, tear it away from the USSR and annex it to Turkey. Mingrelians (Mingrelians) are one of the ethnic groups inhabiting Georgia, Beria was a Mingrelian. Stalin admonished the investigators:

"Look for the big mingrel.

It was clear to everyone who was meant.

The Minister of State Security of Georgia, Lieutenant-General Nikolai Maksimovich Rukhadze, collected materials on Beria. Listening equipment was installed in his mother's apartment in Tbilisi. But Rukhadze was considered close to Beria. Incredibly cruel, Rukhadze demanded cruelty from his subordinates, reproached those who did not beat the arrested:

- Whoever does not beat is the enemy of the people.

But Rukhadze played too much. He tried to push the first secretary of the Central Committee of the republic

Akaki Mgeladze. Appealed directly to Moscow and did not guess. The materials he sent angered Stalin. He dictated the code in Tbilisi:

"The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks received and considered the "certificate" of comrade Rukhadze about supposedly admitted comrade. Mgeladze violations.

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks considers that comrade Rukhadze took the wrong and non-party path, drawing those arrested as witnesses against the party leaders of Georgia, especially against comrade. Mgeladze. In addition, it should be noted that Comrade Rukhadze has no right to circumvent the Central Committee of the CP(b) of Georgia and the Government of Georgia, without the knowledge of which he sent material against them to the Central Committee of the CPSU(b).

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks exposes Comrade Rukhadze's mistake, which may harm the Party and the state, and invites the Bureau of the Central Committee of the KKE to look into the materials mentioned and report its decision to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks."

Tbilisi figured it out and decided to remove Rukhadze from the post of minister and arrest him. On June 25, Stalin reported to Tbilisi: "We advise you to bring the surrender - acceptance of cases to the end, and then send Rukhadze to Moscow, where the question of the fate of Rukhadze will be decided."

On July 1, 1952, Rukhadze was arrested. After Stalin's death, on April 5, 1953, he would tearfully beg Beria:

"Lavrenty Pavlovich, you have known me for over 25 years, I grew up before your eyes and was brought up by you. In recent years, I have committed many crimes, all the little useful that I did in the past is worth absolutely nothing ... Lavrenty Pavlovich, I turn to you, as to my own father and tutor, and on my knees, with tears in my eyes, I ask you to have mercy, forgive and have mercy ... You, and only you, Lavrenty Pavlovich, can save me".

Rukhadze was a master of all trades. When he himself ended up behind bars, the prosecutor's office established that the minister had set up a case against an underground terrorist organization that never existed, the program of which, along with the plan of terrorist attacks against party and Soviet activists, was printed in his apartment.

On October 20, 1952, Stalin told the deputy head of the investigative unit for particularly important cases to Nikolai Konyakhin, who was immediately promoted to colonel:

- I don't like Beria, he doesn't know how to select personnel, he tries to put his people everywhere ...

Lavrenty Pavlovich remained a member of the Bureau of the Presidium of the Central Committee, for the whole country - one of the closest associates of the leader, and the Chekists already proceeded from the fact that it was necessary to prepare a case against him. In 1952, in the documents of the Ministry of State Security, Beria appeared as a nationalist and preparing to overthrow the Soviet regime.

In February 1953, Stalin would actually repeat his phrase when he came to his dacha Ignatiev, Goglidze and Zaichikov will arrive:

- I do not trust Beria, he surrounded himself with some dark personalities.

"Do not feel sorry for your own!"

The post-war years for the Kremlin inhabitants passed in endless intrigues, sometimes fatal.

On October 1, 1950, Secretary of the Central Committee Alexei Alexandrovich Kuznetsov, member of the Politburo, Chairman of the State Planning Commission and Deputy Head of Government Nikolai Alekseevich Voznesensky, member of the Organizing Bureau of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR Mikhail Ivanovich Rodionov were secretly shot. Hundreds of party workers associated with them were fired. 214 people were imprisoned, 23 were shot. It was a demonstrative massacre.

Survivor Iosif Mikhailovich Turko, the former second secretary of the Leningrad Regional Committee, in 1954 told what they did to him: "Since I denied my guilt, investigator Putintsev began to systematically beat me during interrogations. He hit me on the head, on the face, kicked me. After the beatings, he sent me to the punishment cell."

The Leningraders were accused of carrying out wrecking and subversive work: they wanted to create a separate Communist Party of Russia in order to unjustifiably raise the importance of the RSFSR within the Soviet Union, and even transfer the Russian government from Moscow back to the banks of the Neva, to Leningrad.

Two years later, for his far-reaching plan, Stalin needed the already shot Secretary of the Central Committee Alexei Kuznetsov, because he, by decision of the Politburo, had once supervised the Ministry of State Security. The leader decided to connect him with the arrested Abakumov. In life, they did not love each other much, but the leader was not interested in reality.

The shot Kuznetsov cannot be brought to trial, but his wife was in prison. Executive Minister Ignatiev reported to Stalin: "Kuznetsov's wife was brought from the Vladimir prison to the USSR Ministry of State Security for interrogation about sabotage in the medical business and criminal ties with employees of the Kremlin Medical and Sanatorium Administration."

Secretary of the Central Committee Kuznetsov was executed as a man who spoke out against the central leadership. Two years later, the leader called the executed Kuznetsov, along with Abakumov, who shot him, participants in an anti-state conspiracy and Anglo-American agents who plotted to kill the leader and destroy the Soviet Union.

The leader himself formulated the elements of the crime: the terrorist group "was hostile to the party and Soviet power, acted on the instructions of the enemy of the people Kuznetsov, who, in connection with his enemy plans, was interested in eliminating Comrade Zhdanov."

The further, the more the phantasmagoric conspiracy gained scale. Killer doctors who killed the leaders of the party Zhdanov and Shcherbakov. General Colonel Abakumov and other enemies inside the MGB covered them. The secretary of the Central Committee Kuznetsov led them. And the main traitors, they are, apparently, agents of foreign intelligence: members of the Presidium of the Central Committee Molotov, Mikoyan, Voroshilov ...

They arrested the head of the Stalinist guard, General Vlasik. He was accused of revealing the leader's protection scheme to foreign intelligence agencies. They reported to Stalin: this is where the Americans got the plans of the Kremlin, which they were going to shell!

The head of the security department, Lieutenant General Nikolai Sidorovich Vlasik, was like a dog devoted to the leader, who awarded him with many awards - including the military order of Kutuzov of the first degree, although Vlasik was not at the front.

Vlasik graduated from the parochial school. Before the revolution, he worked at a paper mill, during the First World War he served as a non-commissioned officer in a reserve infantry regiment. After the revolution, he went to the police, in 1919 he was taken to the Cheka. He found himself in the security service. The basis of the influence of the head of security is proximity to the owner. The head of security spends more time with his ward than any other close associate. He is both a bodyguard and a servant at the same time. He was privy to many secrets. He took care of the children of the leader, saved them from all troubles and rescued them from trouble.

The leader's office in the Kremlin was on the second floor, and the apartment was on the first. To enter the corridor where Stalin was sitting in the Kremlin, a special pass was required. But no one was checked or searched. Then came a suite of rooms - the secretariat, Poskrebyshchev's room, from which, according to state security officers sensitive to alcohol, the smell of cognac emanated, and the security room, where there were always several people. The head of security, Vlasik, was dozing in an armchair by the door.

The special role of Vlasik and Poskrebyshchev was known.

Different people worked in Stalin's secretariat. Some he put forward for promotion, he got rid of others. Only Poskrebyshchev constantly kept near him. A poorly educated person (he graduated from a medical assistant's school), but the executive turned out to be an ideal assistant. The apparatus mentality helped him to guess the desires of the leader when it came to domestic political intrigues.

The position of Alexander Nikolaevich was called differently. In 1923-1924 he

supervised the affairs of the Central Committee. From 1924 to 1929 he was assistant secretary of the Central Committee, then he was first made deputy head, and then head of the secret department of the Central Committee (clerical work of the Politburo and Stalin's personal office). In accordance with the new charter of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, which was adopted at the 17th Congress in 1934, the secret department of the Central Committee was renamed into a special sector. Poskrebyshev was put in charge of this sector by the decision of the Politburo of March 10, 1934.

Poskrebyshev told how he led the office: "All the documents that came to Comrade Stalin, with the exception of the very secret materials of the MGB, were viewed by me and my deputy, then reported to Comrade Stalin orally or sent to him at his location."

The owner gave Poskrebyshev the general's epaulettes (although he did not serve in the army for a day), four orders of Lenin, made him a member of the Central Committee, a deputy of the Supreme Council, and even the chairman of the commission for legislative proposals of the Council of the Union. After the XIX Congress (October 1952), Poskrebyshev began to call himself the secretary of the presidium and bureau of the presidium of the Central Committee. In the first issue of the main party magazine "Bolshevik" for 1950, an extensive article by Poskrebyshev "I.V. Stalin is a great teacher and friend of the working people." It was served by cars from the special-purpose garage of the MGB security department, which provided cars only for the leaders of the party and government. By a resolution of the Politburo, a Cadillac and a Packard were assigned to the Stalinist assistant.

In 1939, his wife Bronislava Metallikova, an endocrinologist, was arrested. She was imprisoned after her elder brother, surgeon Mikhail Solomonovich Metallikov, who headed the Kremlin Medical and Sanitary Directorate, until he was accused of having, along with other "killer doctors", had a hand in the killing of Maxim Eorky, the head of the OGPU Vyacheslav Rudolfovich Menzhinsky and Politburo member Valerian Vladimirovich Kuibyshev. In the mid-thirties, Bronislava Metallikova traveled to Paris and Berlin. Remembering this trip, she was accused of meeting Trotsky's eldest son, Lev Sedov, abroad...

Two daughters were left without a mother (the eldest was five years old, the youngest was a year and three months old). Poskrebyshev did not dare not only stand up for his wife, but also express doubt about the correctness of Stalin, who authorized her arrest. He continued to serve faithfully. The life of an assistant chief was too good to risk even for the mother of his children. Poskrebyshev's wife was shot in October 1941, when the German army stood near Moscow. He married again.

He was not the only one who lost his wife. In 1938, the wife of a member of the Politburo and chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, was arrested: "Under the pretext of inspecting the furniture that I intended to purchase, they took me out of the Kremlin in a car, where I lived. Near the monument to Minin and Pozharsky, a man unknown to me in the uniform of an NKVD officer got into the car. I was taken to the NKVD building on Lubyanskaya Square, where this officer announced that I was under arrest, after which I was placed in solitary confinement in the internal prison. At night, investigator Ivanov called me for interrogation and, immediately calling me a spy, began to demand evidence with whom I was connected by espionage.

Of course, the investigators were interested in Kalinin himself.

"Investigators asked who visits Mikhail Ivanovich, where he keeps his official documents, with whom he is in correspondence, what he talks about with people who visit him, whether he dedicates relatives and friends to his official affairs. The investigation wanted to get evidence from me that would compromise Mikhail Ivanovich."

Her testimony was not satisfied with the investigators, and one night Kalinin's wife was brought to Beria himself: "Beria began by calling me a spy, an old provocateur, and demanded testimony - with whom I worked and in favor of which state I was engaged in betrayal. Beria suggested to the female investigator that they beat me. She became

hit me with his fist, and Beria told her: "Beat me in the head."

In 1939, in Sverdlovsk, in a transit prison, the writer Galina Iosifovna Serebryakova met many Muscovites convicted as family members of a traitor to the motherland.

"Do you know who over there in the corner is sitting on a bag of things and drinking boiling water?" Don't know? - one of her old friends asked her.

Serebryakova carefully looked at the tall, thin, simple-haired woman:

- Don't know.

- Yes you? This is Ekaterina Ivanovna Kalinina, the wife of Mikhail Ivanovich.

Serebryakova was amazed.

- Well, yes, she is the best. The husband is our president, and she is convicted as a spy. That's fate...

Kalinin's wife was sent to the camp for fifteen years. The leader did not touch Mikhail Ivanovich himself. Like Poskrebyshhev. He proceeded from the fact that, terrified to death, they would serve him even more zealously.

Stalin lectured the General Secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers, Alexander Alexandrovich Fadeev:

"People roll around like pebbles in sea water. But you do not know how to run people around - that's your trouble. A politician has no right to be too impressionable. You never know what sharp corners people have, life grinds them in the interests of a common cause.

But others fawned over Poskrebyshhev. Part of the Stalinist omnipotence extended to the assistant. Admiral Nikolai Gerasimovich Kuznetsov, commander of the fleet, and General Andrey Vasilievich Khrulev, head of the rear of the Red Army, and famous artists - singers Sergey Yakovlevich Lemeshev and Ivan Semenovich Kozlovsky, were looking for his friendship.

Alexander Trifonovich Tvardovsky rested in Barvikha with Poskrebyshhev:

"A small, bald man almost to the back of the head with a crumpled, shaved face, on which, however, as in the form of a small head stretched back and up and a forehead dropped almost flat from the eyebrows, a resemblance to a baby and a monkey appears. The lower part of the face most of all determines this second similarity - heavy, pushed forward. The voice is unexpectedly low, with a slight hoarseness.

His name in the hardware (high) circles sounded like a sign of the highest authority, the decisive authority. So-and-so Poskrebyshhev called - it meant that it was almost Stalin who called, actually Stalin, broadcasting the flesh of his voice. Up close, he gives the impression, first of all, of a person not only poorly educated, unread, but simply narrow-minded and almost illiterate.

Vlasik and Poskrebyshhev felt their importance. Until at one point they lost their proximity to the leader. At the end of December 1952, Stalin broke up with Poskrebyshhev. He took Vladimir Nikiforovich Malin as an assistant. He worked for many years in Belarus, relatively young became the secretary of the republican Central Committee. During the war, Brigadier Commissar Malin led the political department of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement. After the war - retraining courses for party workers under the Central Committee. For several years he was secretary of the Leningrad city committee. In 1952, Malin was taken to the apparatus of the Central Committee. He was a stranger in the Moscow apparatus, and this suited Stalin.

The answer to the question of why General Vlasik, the chief of security, was so influential, must be sought not in the personality of the chief guard, but in the position itself. But its name is misleading: the safety of the leader is only part of the concern of his personal protection. This is the Kremlin tradition. It is in the West that the guards only protect. We are all different. Clothing and food, furniture and the choice of summer cottages, health and leisure, delicate errands and secret meetings - Everyone is under personal protection.

When the leader was returning from Sochi to Moscow in December 1945, it was not possible to travel by rail. Stalin was taken by car. And the special cars were driven in a roundabout way, through Georgia. The train was waiting for him across the pass. But in the hustle and bustle, the commandant of the state dacha made a monstrous mistake.

"At I.V. Stalin had slippers with which he did not part and always took with him when he went to rest to the south, - said the captain of state security Yuri Sergeevich Solovyov, an officer of the field security unit No. 1 of the Security Directorate of the MTB of the USSR. -

When leaving, we didn't have time to put these house slippers on the train!"

Due to anatomical features, his legs hurt, so Stalin did not like new shoes, he preferred worn ones. In the security department, they imagined how angry the leader would be if he did not find his usual shoes. But they found a way out. Even in a war-torn country, the Stalinist guards knew no embarrassment in anything.

Captain Solovyov received a package with the leader's slippers from the commandant of the state dacha No. 1 in Sochi and flew to Moscow by plane. Solovyov was proud of the exact execution of the most important assignment: "Traveller slippers arrived in Moscow before their owner and ended up in the traditional place by the bed." The captain served in Stalin's guard from 1943 until his death in 1953.

General Vlasik even addressed the party elite with "you". Everything is in front of him fawned over.

- After my appointment to the Main Directorate of Soviet Property Abroad, - recalled Vsevolod Merkulov (removed from the post of Minister of State Security, he felt extremely insecure), - at one of the diplomatic receptions, Vlasik secretly told me that in a casual conversation with him, Comrade Stalin directly said that he trusts me.

Svetlana Alliluyeva recalled:

"Vlasik considered himself almost the closest person to his father, and, being himself incredibly illiterate, rude, stupid, but noble, in recent years he went so far as to dictate to some artists "the tastes of Comrade Stalin," as he believed that he knows them well and understands ... His impudence knew no bounds.

The same "patron of the arts" was Poskrebyshhev.

The wife of the writer Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov wrote in her diary that when Bulgakov's Moliere was shown at the Moscow Art Theater on February 11, 1937, an important guest came: "Today Stalin's secretary Poskrebyshhev watched Moliere. He really liked the performance, and he said: "It is imperative that I.V. looked."

General Vlasik not only guarded Stalin, but was also responsible for his life. In the most difficult post-war years, Stalin ordered the construction of new residences for him to rest - near Sukhumi, near New Athos, in Valdai and on Lake Ritsa. He was not embarrassed that the country was destroyed and starving, and this budget money could be used to build hospitals or schools. But he was annoyed when he saw millions of estimates.

Svetlana Stalin wrote about her father:

"He didn't know how to account for modern money, or how much anything costs. He did not spend money himself, there was nowhere and nothing to spend it on. All his life, dachas, houses, servants, food, clothes - all this was paid for by the state, for which there was a special department in the MGB system, and there was its own accounting department, and it is not known how much they spent ... He himself did not know this. Sometimes he attacked his commandants and the generals of their guards, Vlasik with abuse: "Passenger! Profit here, I know how much money you have through a sieve!"

The leader reprimanded Vlasik when, in September 1947, he saw how much a new dacha on Lake Ritsa would cost. But he did not refuse such an expensive project (on September 30, the order of the Council of Ministers on the construction was signed), and from now on he ordered to show him all the papers in advance. He proceeded from the fact that his servants in general's uniforms, hung with orders, constantly cheat. He threatened Vlasik and his henchmen with his finger:

"Ask the British, the Americans. They never managed to deceive me, and yet there were serious opponents among them. And you are going to fool me!

A year later, on August 4, 1948, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Serov reported to the government on the commissioning of state dacha No. 11 on Lake Ritsa:

"Built:

The main house and interior decoration with precious woods.

Floating veranda connected to the shore by a bridge.

Boiler room, heating tunnel from the electric boiler room to the house, refrigerator with a cubic capacity of 650 cubic meters. meters with three refrigerating chambers, an underground pumping station with a receiving chamber and two pumps, external communications for heating, hot and cold water supply, sewerage and power supply.

On the territory of the park (9.3 hectares), the forest was cut down, the stumps were uprooted. 4,600 young trees, 1,200 shrubs and 40,000 flowers have been planted. Fountains and flowerbeds were built in the park. The territory is illuminated by electric lamps and provided with irrigation water supply. Asphalt roads have been built.

Poskrebyshv recalled that Stalin did not like how the leader's trips to the south were provided: "Setting up reinforced guards along the train route and in Comrade Stalin's resting places, suspending railway traffic while the train was running and clearing the highway during trips in the south."

The leader was upset not by the huge costs and not by the fact that the normal life of the people was being disturbed. He didn't think about it. He was indignant at the fact that "the entire population in these areas knew that Comrade Stalin was coming. Instead of conspiracy, the widest publicity was obtained.

The leader did not offend the nomenklatura either.

In 1947, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Voroshilov signed an order to build the Central Clinical Hospital of the Kremlin Medical and Sanitary Department, allocating 150 hectares of land for it. The decision to build a hospital for the authorities was made in 1944, at the height of the war.

Senior officials are accustomed to luxury.

Lieutenant-General Pavel Gavrilovich Drozdetsky, head of the Sverdlovsk Regional Directorate of State Security, was resting at his dacha. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a call. His deputy, Lieutenant-General Pavel Mikhailovich Fitin (the recent chief of foreign intelligence who had fallen out of favor with Stalin) said that Minister Abakumov was waiting for his call. Drozdetsky rushed to the office and ordered a conversation on the HF. He was quickly connected. Abakumov ordered him to immediately stop his vacation, vacate the dacha and prepare it for Beria, who was flying to the east of the country and making a stop in Sverdlovsk.

- I was asked to purchase the necessary furniture, - General Drozdetsky recalled, - to prepare delicious food, the best wines, and so on, without being embarrassed by means.

High officials were provided with a heavenly life in years when entire districts were starving. Inspector of the Department for Inspection of Party Organs of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks A.A. Nazarov on March 25, 1947 reported to the secretariat of the Central Committee:

"The number of workers suffering from dystrophy has significantly increased at the enterprises of the city of Mariupol, Stalin Region, in recent years. According to the conclusion of doctors, 3789 dystrophy diseases were registered in five factories of Mariupol. The greatest morbidity is present at the plant. Ilyich, where there are 2475 people with dystrophy, 1695 of them are children, 65 people died for this reason.

The number of diseases in enterprises is increasing every day. The increase in the incidence of dystrophy is largely due to the fact that the Ministry of Trade of the USSR for five months has been systematically reducing the limits for the distribution of bread and products to enterprises. A significant part of disabled dependents and children do not receive bread and food at all."

Stalin was annoyed that the construction and renovation of the residences were slow. General Vlasik wrote in his diary how in September 1948, going on vacation to the Crimea, the leader scolded him: why only in the summer they started repairing state dacha No. 5 (the former Yusupov Palace), why there is no sea water...

In August 1951, Stalin went to Tskhaltubo to take medicinal baths. But in Tskaltubo it turned out to be hot and stuffy. The leader expressed a desire to move to Borjomi, they arrived at another former palace, turned into a rest home for senior officials of the Central Committee of the Council of Ministers of Georgia.

They caught an unsightly picture, Vlasik was indignant: "There were no the most basic amenities, the baths did not work due to the lack of hot water. The water heaters were out of order. The doors had no proper locks. There is dirt everywhere, the rooms, apparently, have never been cleaned or swept."

For the sake of the leader, they did their best. We drove cars to Sochi and Tbilisi for faucets and water heaters. Vlasik was upset: if he had known, he had sent repair teams from Moscow in advance.

In the same year, General Anatoly Mikhailovich Guskov headed the Gorky Regional Directorate of State Security. Late at night, he was invited by the first secretary of the regional party committee, Dmitry Grigorievich Smirnov:

- The plan for the procurement of bread is in danger of failure. Put on your uniform and shake up the district boss, maybe you can knock something out.

"With the secretary, captain Balalaykin, we went to the Knyagininsky district, - recalled General Guskov. - We arrived in the village where the board of the collective farm "Bright Way" was located. The village seemed to be dead. Ragged houses with thatched roofs. Occasionally came across elderly, poorly dressed women, children and very old people. They came to the collective farm household yard. The picture is even more bleak. Carts, wheels, clamps, arcs were scattered all over the yard. Not a single cart fit for travel, not a single harness that could be put on a horse. And there were no horses to be seen.

The supreme power was not interested in the plight of the country. Stalin's service haunted by other fears.

In New Athos, where Stalin dined with Beria, new wine was brought. The leader ordered to store the wine at a temperature not lower than 13-15 degrees, and it was supercooled. This terrible incident forever crashed into Vlasik's memory.

"The servants brought the ill-fated wine to the table without checking the temperature," he recalled at the end of his life. - Comrade Stalin was outraged that his repeated remarks were not taken into account. All this greatly infuriated Comrade Stalin, and he justly expressed his distrust of us. T. Stalin could not calm down in any way ... I don't know how my heart held out, I thought that I would lose consciousness. After this incident, I did not sleep for three days."

Vlasik himself lived merrily, drank and walked at public expense. He brought women to government dachas, it happened, right at the dinner table he arranged shooting - at crystal glasses. Wasted on trophy property. In a starving, war-torn country, the depraved, insolent and completely uncontrollable servants of the leader arranged a beautiful life for themselves.

And in his impunity, Vlasik went too far.

Apparently, someone drew Stalin's attention to the rampant lifestyle of the main guard and remarked: is it possible to trust the life of a leader to such an unreliable person?

But not for this reason, Vlasik lost the favor of the leader. Stalin was extremely lenient towards such sins. Let's say he was presented with documents regarding the Minister of Agriculture of the USSR Ivan Alexandrovich Benediktov: "Benediktov behaved unworthily: for a long time he has two families; during the construction of a dacha for a second family, using his official position, he contributed to the receipt of labor, transport and building materials in organizations subordinate to the ministry. He received an apartment for the second family at the expense of the living space intended for the employees of the ministry. During business trips and trips to the resort, he allowed excesses in spending public funds.

Punishment? Got off with a reprimand. The minister was only obliged to "order family life." It is clear that Ivan Benediktov remained fiery until the end of his life.

Stalinist. What other leader of the country would show such condescension?

For the same reason, the owner of Azerbaijan, Mir-Jafar Abbasovich Bagirov, worshiped the leader, who could do anything.

In 1948, the Ministry of State Control of the USSR received information that the leaders of the Azerbaijani government were building dachas for themselves, setting up a subsidiary farm there at public expense and selling grown fruits and vegetables.

The Minister of State Control was the former Stalinist assistant Lev Zakharovich Mekhlis. He was tough on personnel, ruthlessly and often unfairly removed from office - sometimes for a cause, sometimes on someone's slander. Perhaps his only trait that evokes sympathy is his personal fearlessness. At the front, he himself raised the fighters to attack. In March 1946, Mekhlis began work in the state control department created by Stalin. The leader wanted Mekhlis to keep order in all the people's commissariats, so Lev Zakharovich received the broadest powers, including the right to control the entire state apparatus.

Mekhlis ordered to check the financial and economic activities of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR. One and a half hundred people took part in the audit, the group was led by Deputy Minister of State Control Yemelyanov. It was not difficult to identify traces of the lordly behavior of the highest republican officials, accustomed to complete impunity. Today it would be called corruption, then they talked about abuses.

Mir-Jafar Bagirov was in a bad mood. He spent hours sitting in his office with his devoted assistants, looking for opportunities to counterplay. The most striking thing is that in a republic where a real personality cult reigned, some officials fled from a sinking ship. They decided that the position of the first secretary of the Central Committee was shaken and Bagirov would be removed.

"Bagirov realized that there was no salvation for him," recalled Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov, a former Baku oilman, at that time a union minister. "And he went on a vile provocation ... Bagirov skillfully organized Yemelyanov's trip to Makhachkala with one of the Baku beauties, and he himself immediately reported everything to Stalin, and attached intimate, eloquent photographs to the letter."

Turning to Stalin, the head of the republic went for broke and won.

The leader appreciated Mekhlis for his energy and determination. Lev Zakharovich recognized the authority of only one person - Stalin. When he defended a tougher position, he allowed himself to object to the leader himself. Stalin, by the way, was not offended when he saw that Mekhlis was trying to be a greater Stalinist than the Secretary General himself.

But Mekhlis, believing the inspection in Baku to be an ordinary matter, did not personally coordinate it with the leader. And he did not like amateur performances. But he appreciated it when his subordinates honestly laid out everything about each other that they knew was bad. Thanks to this rivalry, Stalin figured out who had what weaknesses. Bagirov reported first, and the leader took his side.

Mekhlis's subordinates were reprimanded for neglecting the opinion of Baku. The deputy minister who led the inspection was removed from his post - "during a business trip in Azerbaijan, he behaved obscenely - communication with random, politically dubious women, visiting suspicious apartments in connection with this, traveling with women to Makhachkala." The Deputy Minister for Personnel was dismissed for the fact that he "in an obscene, cheeky manner made rude attacks against the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Azerbaijan, comrade Bagirov, accusing him, without any reason, of provocative actions in relation to the employees of the ministry."

Lev Zakharovich himself was reproached for "covering up their wrong actions." Baku officials, one might say, escaped with a slight fright.

The Politburo's resolution stated:

"To propose to the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Azerbaijan to consider the materials of the State Control on the illegal actions of the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR Islam-Zade, admitted by him in the construction of a dacha for himself, and to submit to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks his

decision on this matter."

They reacted more severely to another deputy head of the republican government: "T. Azizbekov Aziz Meshadi-Ogly, being the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR, without the permission of the government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Azerbaijan in 1944 acquired a dacha with an area of 3.5 hectares, and in official documents he called it "government dacha No. 3 " and spent significant public funds on its construction. The products of the dacha economy, on his instructions, were sold through state trade organizations at increased prices; the proceeds from the sale went to his personal current account in the State Bank ... For misbehavior to announce Comrade Azizbekov A.M. severe reprimand with registration in the registration card.

At the party activists in Baku, Mir-Jafar Baghirov triumphed. He not only openly mocked the Moscow controllers, but also threatened his henchmen, who doubted his ability to defeat any hardware opponent:

- Some decided that Bagirov was swaying, and behaved unscrupulously. Well then they sat in the presidiums for a long time. No more sitting...

The leader allowed loyal people to enjoy life. So this is not the reason for the disgrace of the head of the Main Directorate of Security.

It is generally accepted that Vlasik fell victim to the intrigues of Beria, that Lavrenty Pavlovich eliminated two people devoted to the leader: Vlasik and personal assistant Alexander Nikolaevich Poskrebyshchev. Beria allegedly was preparing to kill the leader and removed all the people loyal to Stalin in advance and surrounded the leader with his henchmen.

Rather, the opposite is true: the leader considered Vlasik connected with Beria. And in 1952 Stalin did not want Lavrenty Pavlovich to have his man next to the leader.

For what reason did Vlasik fall into disgrace?

Back in June 1947, an officer of the Main Security Directorate of the MGB was arrested - Deputy commandant of the Stalinist "near" dacha, Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Ivanovich Fedoseev. Information reached Stalin that his guards arranged drinking parties, brought in prostitutes, treated themselves to wine and food intended for the leader. And they even seemed to look into the secret papers lying on Stalin's desk.

They also imprisoned Fedoseev's wife, who also once worked at the "nearby" dacha. The lieutenant colonel was accused of disclosing state secrets, anti-Soviet agitation and abuse of office. A year later, in July 1948, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Serov reported to Stalin about the end of the investigation, proposed to let Fedoseyev through the Special Conference and sentence him to twenty years in prison.

The leader was in no hurry. Fedoseev was needed later. His case was transferred to the MGB. Now Abakumov was interrogating him. Protocols were not drawn up or not preserved. The lieutenant colonel was kept in a special prison for the most important criminals. Fedoseev complained to the investigator that in the cell "there was a whisper, a rustle from different corners, someone kept saying: "Confess, confess, you are a traitor."

Fedoseyev was beaten and tortured to make him give the necessary testimony. He signed the protocol of interrogation, which stated that he received the order to poison Stalin from the head of the personal guard of the leader Nikolai Sidorovich Vlasik.

The leader attached so much importance to this story that Malenkov took up the investigation into the Fedoseyev case. He himself interrogated the lieutenant colonel twice.

In 1947, the death penalty was abolished, and in January 1950 it was restored. On March 1, Abakumov, then still a minister, turned to Stalin:

"In addition to the list submitted to you of arrested traitors to the motherland, spies and saboteurs, whom the USSR Ministry of State Security considers necessary in accordance with the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of January 12, 1950, to condemn to death, I ask for your permission to consider in the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court and sentenced to death - a former employee of the Main Directorate of Protection

Ministry of State Security of the USSR Fedoseev, accused of espionage.

The investigation established that Fedoseyev, being at a particularly important object of protection, for a number of years secretly read secret documents of national importance, blurted out their contents in conversations with colleagues and his relatives.

Abakumov also asked for fifteen years for Fedoseev's wife, Pelageya Andreevna, and his brother Anatoly Ivanovich, also a former security officer, an employee of the counterintelligence department of the MGB for the Dnieper military flotilla.

In April, Stalin signed the first execution list, which included Fedoseyev. On April 18, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR formalized the sentence already pronounced by the leader. On the same day, the former lieutenant colonel was shot. Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov sent one of his subordinates from the apparatus of the Central Committee to be present at the execution: what if the lieutenant colonel confesses something else before his death?

On January 17, 1953, the recent head of the security department of the MGB, Major General Sergei Fedorovich Kuzmichev, was arrested as an "accomplice in espionage activities." He served in the Stalinist guard since 1932, rose to the head of security department No. 1. In 1947 he was sent to study at the Higher School of the MGB. In November 1948, he headed the security department No. 2. But in November 1950, he fell out of favor - he was sent to Bryansk as deputy head of the regional department. They will release him after Stalin's death...

Stalin said that not everything was all right in the Main Security Directorate, and instructed Malenkov to head a commission to check the work of the directorate. To begin with, Vlasik was accused of financial omissions - the products allocated for the Politburo were brazenly stolen by numerous servants. When claims were made against servants in uniform, the guards in the head office could not even understand what they wanted from them: in this circle everyone lives like that, delighting themselves at public expense. At the same time, they sincerely considered themselves statesmen who protect their native country.

General Vlasik justified himself by saying that he was illiterate and unable to understand financial documents. On April 29, 1952, he was relieved of his post, removed from the collegium of the Ministry of State Security and expelled from the party. At the same time, almost the entire leadership of the security service was dispersed.

On May 19, a resolution of the Central Committee "On shortcomings in the work of the Main Directorate of Security of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR" appeared: "As a result of an audit conducted by the commission of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the unfavorable state of affairs in the Main Directorate of Security of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR was revealed and the existence of anti-state practices in financial and economic activities and in the organization of the service of the Main Directorate The head of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR Comrade Vlasik and his deputies and some of their subordinate employees committed criminal waste and lack of control in spending funds.

Minister Ignatiev temporarily took over the duties of the head of the security department. But he himself could not deal with this vast economy. In July 1952, he summoned Colonel Nikolai Novik, whom he knew from Minsk, where he rose to the position of Deputy People's Commissar of State Security of Belarus, offered him the position of deputy head of the department.

"I tried to give up my position," Novik said, "motivating this by the fact that I had never dealt with security issues and it would be very difficult for me to delve into all the features, complexities and details of a completely new field of activity for me. The minister reacted to this very violently and nervously. Ignatiev irritably said that he, a party worker, had never dealt with problems of state security, and nevertheless he was appointed Minister of the USSR Ministry of State Security.

Novik was introduced to Stalin, after which Ignatiev ordered him to sit in Vlasik's office and take over. But there was no one to take over, all the heads of the security department were already in jail.

Vlasik was removed from Moscow - he was sent to the Urals in the city of Asbest as the deputy head of the Bazhenov correctional labor camp. In November he was called to Moscow.

December 16, 1952 was arrested. The next day, the First Deputy Minister of State Security, General Goglidze, reported to Stalin that Vlasik was already sitting in a cell.

Nikolai Sidorovich did not expect this from the leader: "I was severely offended by Stalin. Behind my boundless devotion he gave me into the hands of my enemies."

The former chief of the leader's security was accused of having American spies in his entourage. They demanded to confess that he had revealed to them the Stalinist security system. In the development of the Ministry of State Security, Vlasik appeared as a participant in a conspiracy to kill Stalin.

On February 19, 1952, the recent ambassador to Great Britain, Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky, was arrested. He worked in London for over ten years. In the forty-first year, Stalin included him in the list of candidates for membership in the Central Committee. Maisky allowed himself more than other Soviet diplomats, but even he was forced to be extremely cautious.

The famous American journalist Harrison Salisbury recalled:

"I realized that quite often Ambassador Maisky's refusal to comment on anything was a comment in itself. It was similar to what I later learned in Moscow: what is important is not what Pravda writes, but what it does not write about.

Ivan Maisky did a lot to strengthen relations between the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. But in 1943, irritated by the delay in opening the second front, Stalin recalled Maisky. He was approved as Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, but without a specific range of duties. And in the forty-sixth, they were removed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Molotov asked the leader:

- Where to put him?

Stalin asked if Maisky was writing anything. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich recalled that his deputy wrote works on the British labor movement. The issue has been resolved. Ivan Mikhailovich began work at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences, in November 1946 he was elected an academician.

And in early 1952, the recent ambassador was accused of working for British intelligence and that he considered Western leaders to be friends of the Soviet Union. Three of his recent subordinates, former employees of the Soviet embassy in London, were arrested, among them the well-known publicist Ernst Henry (aka Semyon Nikolaevich Rostovsky, aka Leonid Arkadyevich Khentov, a man with a fantastically interesting biography, author of two books famous in the thirties - "Hitler over Europe "and" Hitler against the USSR "). Maisky broke down and "admitted" that he had been spying on the British since 1925.

He was required to testify against other diplomats, including Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai. The investigators wanted to build a case of a spy network among diplomats. Maisky understood what awaited him, asked at least to save his life.

In March 1953, Beria decides to release him. And Beria will also be blamed for this. Prosecutor General Rudenko during interrogation will demand from Lavrenty Pavlovich:

- Admit that you acted to please British intelligence, saving Maisky from punishment. Admit that, having become an agent of British intelligence during the Civil War, you served British imperialism for all subsequent years, right up to your exposure and arrest?

On June 13, 1955, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court sentenced Maisky to six years of exile, but on July 21 the Presidium of the Central Committee pardoned him. He was rehabilitated only in 1960-m.

Harrison Salisbury described how, in 1967, he last spoke with Maisky in his apartment on Gorky Street. "Stalin didn't trust anyone," Maisky told him. "Hitler was the only person whom Stalin trusted."

And the Lubyanka sounded the alarm: British spies are working in the very heart of the country. The Main Directorate of Counterintelligence reported to Minister Ignatiev: "Back in 1938-1941. The residency of the MGB of the USSR in London obtained British intelligence materials, from which it is clear that the British managed to obtain information about some meetings

Politburo and plenums of the Central Committee. One of the documents indicated that the British agent was well placed to obtain information from the inner circle of one of the members of the Politburo. It is possible that, until recently, British intelligence received similar information, since in 1941 the connection with the agents through which our residency managed to obtain this data was lost.

Ignatiev reported to Stalin that suspicions were falling on Vlasik and Poskrebyshchev.

Vlasik was associated with the artist Vladimir Avgustovich Stenberg, who for many years decorated Red Square for all holidays. And he was considered a spy, because until 1933 he was a Swedish subject.

Vlasik was accused of having secret conversations in the presence of Stenberg. He allowed his friend to fly security planes in Sochi. He showed him photographs, including pictures of Stalin's dacha on Lake Ritsa. The MGB decided to arrest Stenberg. Vlasik realized that this would greatly compromise him, and turned to Ignatiev. He did not quarrel with the Stalinist guard and allowed to send the case to the archive.

But in January 1953, five people were arrested in this case. They reported to the authorities: "One of the objects of development had close contact with the former head of the Main Directorate of Security of the MGB Vlasik. After familiarizing himself with the materials of this case, Vlasik summoned the object of development and told him about the materials available to him. After that, he put him in the car and took him to his dacha, where he had drunken parties more than once before. The next day, this development object alerted other persons associated with it about the materials on them.

During interrogations, Vlasik was demanded an answer:

- What brought you closer to Stenberg?
- The rapprochement was on the basis of joint drinks and acquaintances with women.
- Did you issue passes for passage to Red Square during parades to your friends and cohabitants?

- Yes, but please note that I only gave passes to people whom I knew well.

- But you were given a pass to Red Square by a certain Nikolaeva, who was associated with foreign journalists?

- I just now realized what I did, giving her a pass, a crime.

The leader, having learned that Vlasik was not beaten, reproached the investigators that they "pity their own." Investigators were instructed to beat the arrested with "mortal combat".

"Minister of State Security comrade. Ignatiev told us at the meeting that the government assesses the course of the investigation in cases that were in our proceedings as clearly unsatisfactory, and said that it was necessary to "remove white gloves" and "with caution" resort to beating the arrested, - reported in a report dated 24 March 1953, Colonel Pyotr Vasilievich Fedotov, deputy head of the investigative unit for especially important cases of the USSR Ministry of State Security. - Saying this, comrade. Ignatiev made it clear that there are instructions from above on this matter. A separate room for beatings was equipped in the inner prison, and a group of prison workers was assigned to carry out torture ...

In February 1953, Comrade Ignatiev, having called me to his place and conveyed comments on the interrogation protocol of Vlasik presented to Comrade Stalin, suggested applying physical measures of influence to him. At the same time, Comrade Ignatiev stated that Comrade Stalin, having learned that Vlasik had not been beaten, reproached that the investigation "pities his own."

According to the daughter of General Vlasik, "he was kept in handcuffs all the time and was not allowed to sleep for several days in a row. And when he lost consciousness, they turned on a bright light, and behind the wall they put a record with a heart-rending child's cry on the gramophone.

Stalin proceeded from the fact that Vlasik gave out his security system to the main enemy - Americans.

Line eight

Main enemy

In April 1946, at a meeting in the Central Committee on ideological issues, Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov announced a new instruction from the leader: to engage in "treatment of shortcomings on the ideological front" and fight against the harmful thesis that "people should be given a rest after the war."

The authorities were unable to feed the people. But it could scare and discourage the desire to complain and talk about difficulties. The post-war years turned out to be gloomy and difficult not only because of the famine and the slow recovery of the national economy. In 1949, Stalin ordered the Ministry of State Security:

"To carry out the necessary KGB measures in the Krasnoyarsk Territory, Novosibirsk, Omsk and Irkutsk Regions to curb the activities of enemy elements, given that these areas in the past were centers of Kolchakism."

Almost thirty years have passed since the execution of Admiral Kolchak, who once fought against the Soviet regime. But in the minds of Soviet leaders, the Civil War was not yet over. In those parts, they were looking for uranium deposits, and it seemed to the leader that Kolchak's men were still active there, capable of preventing this.

Stalin read the reports of the Ministry of State Security and knew that people had great hopes for the end of the war; they craved a satisfying life, liberalization and tranquility. The peasants hoped that the collective farms would be dissolved. But expectations were not met, and disappointment arose.

Fyodor Ivanovich Panferov, newly elected deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, editor-in-chief of the Oktyabr magazine, blindly devoted to the leader, wrote to Stalin at the end of February 1946:

"I have just returned from the Omutninsky constituency (Kirov region).
I stayed there for about a month, and no matter who I met, everyone asked me to tell you:

- Big Russian bow.

This is my tribute to you.

In addition, I pledged to the voters to tell you about them.

Apparently, even before the war, trading and supplying organizations paid little attention to such suburbs - that is why people are ragged, unshod, wear homespun cloth, bast shoes, wooden blocks. The guys are especially badly dressed. In remote areas there is neither kerosene (even in schools), nor electricity (they burn a torch). Adults have forgotten what sugar is, and the guys have no idea about sugar. There is nowhere to buy even a comb, buttons, needles, soap. I lost my hairbrush. I went around all the shops in Kirov. One said: "There are combs, but not important." And I bought ... Remember, they said: this comb is for the dead. So this comb is for the dead. You can't scratch it in any way: it pulls like a rake.

Panferov added: "I'm sending it to you." And crossed out those words.

The state security apparatus reported who was primarily dissatisfied with the situation in the country: these are those who have been to the West and at least saw Western life out of the corner of their eye, - soldiers and officers of the Red Army.

Konstantin Mikhailovich Simonov recalled how in May 1947 Stalin received leaders of the Writers' Union. We discussed current affairs. The leader suddenly changed the subject.

- If you take our average intelligentsia, scientific intelligentsia, professors, doctors, they have not sufficiently cultivated a sense of Soviet patriotism. They have an unjustified admiration for foreign culture. A simple peasant will not bow over trifles, will not break his hat, but such people lack dignity, patriotism, and understanding of the role played by Russia. The military also had such admiration. Now it's less...

It seemed to Konstantin Simonov that there was a reason in Stalin's words that the upbringing of Soviet patriotism was good for the country. In reality, this served to strengthen the cold

war and inciting hostility towards the West. More insightful people understood this.

In March 1949, a professor at Moscow University, Sergei Sergeevich Dmitriev, described in his diary a meeting of the Academic Council of the Faculty of History: they discussed measures to cleanse the faculty of cosmopolitans. They talked about Trotskyism, about the hostile, underground work of a group of historians...

Professor Dmitriev asked his neighbor-colleague in astonishment:

What is at the heart of this whole thing?

"War," he replied. "We need to prepare the people for a new war. She's getting close.

Stalin widely pushed the boundaries of the Soviet empire, he took care of the establishment of socialism in Eastern Europe. In essence, there was only one serious adversary left - the United States. A victory over America would mean a worldwide victory for the Bolsheviks. Therefore, the new divisions went not to the West, but to the East. The theater of operations was to be deployed in Alaska. This is a little-studied part of the post-war history, which almost became pre-war.

Historians believe that the Cold War started over Iran. At the end of August 1941, Soviet and British troops entered Iran from both sides in order to put an end to German influence here, control the oil fields and secure military supplies to the Soviet Union via the Trans-Iranian railway.

With the active assistance of the Red Army units, in 1945, the People's Democratic State of South Azerbaijan was proclaimed in northern Iran. The United States was indignant: a rebellion broke out in the northern part of Iran, why did the Soviet authorities prevent government troops from restoring order?

In conversations with the Americans, Stalin did not say that the Red Army was obliged to help the insurgent people. Frankly explained that he needed Iranian oil:

You don't understand our situation. The main source of our oil is the fields in Baku. They are close to the border with Iran and they are very vulnerable. Beria tells me that pests - one man with a box of matches - can cause serious damage to us. We cannot risk oil supplies.

Stalin did not clash with Washington. He withdrew troops from Northern Iran. The American embassy reported to the State Department: "The Soviets are not taking unnecessary risks. Deaf to the logic of reason, they are highly sensitive to logic strength."

But Stalin was offended. He proceeded from the fact that in his sphere of interests he has the right to do as he sees fit. I could not understand why the Americans are concerned about the situation in a region so far from them. Why is he being hindered? Is it because the United States claims world domination?

In January 1951, Stalin gathered the general secretaries and defense ministers of the socialist countries. He said that by the end of 1953 NATO would have completed its preparations and by that time the socialist camp should have created the corresponding armed forces. The Chief of the General Staff, General Sergei Matveyevich Shtemenko, read out from the list how many soldiers and what kind of weapons each of the socialist countries should have.

In the Soviet Union, the modernization of the armed forces was underway, new equipment, nuclear weapons, and an ocean fleet were being created at an accelerated pace. In 1949, the volume of military orders increased sharply due to the creation of new equipment. They made a plan for the production of tanks until 1970. During the Korean War, the Soviet army doubled in size and was six million people.

The mobilization plan was reported by Chief of the General Staff Shtemenko to each member Politburo personally. Beria immediately asked: Is this a war plan?

The Minister of War, Marshal Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilevsky, and the Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army Sergei Matveyevich Shtemenko, asked the government to additionally recruit qualified specialists into the army. The conscripts were

necessary for the development of new equipment - Tu-4, Il-28, MiG-15 aircraft, tanks, easel grenade launchers.

Minister of State Security Ignatiev and Minister of War Vasilevsky approved a plan of sabotage by military and political intelligence against NATO and American military bases.

On October 24, 1950, Marshal Vasilevsky signed a directive on the creation of special forces units - for operations behind enemy lines. Task: reconnaissance, destruction of command posts, missile launchers, strategic aircraft, communications and power supply systems. First, 46 companies were formed (company size - 120 people). Then they were deployed into battalions and brigades of a special

destination.

In the autumn of 1952, it was decided to build additional airfields for Tupolev and Myasishchev heavy long-range bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Airfields were built on the territory of Eastern European countries and China in order to be able to bomb not only Western Europe, but also American bases in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Stalin decided to form a hundred divisions of front-line aviation jet bombers. The figure seemed fantastic to the pilots. Air Marshal Pavel Fedorovich Zhigarev, Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, held an urgent meeting. He looked very worried.

Where this figure came from, no one knows. In the General Staff they make a helpless gesture. They cannot explain on the basis of what calculations it is necessary to form such an armada. Yes, and no one consulted with us, did not ask if the Air Force could solve such a problem ...

A little later, the commander-in-chief gathered the leadership of operational management:

- Understand why we need a hundred divisions? Calculate all parameters. Including in case of war, taking into account the actions of bomber aircraft in all operational areas.

Calculations showed that in case of war the country would need no more than sixty bomber divisions. But to help such a number of bombers, you need to create about thirty fighter divisions and about ten reconnaissance aviation regiments. An impossible task for the country.

But Stalin needed only bombers! How to be?

The Commander-in-Chief of Aviation went with all the calculations to the Minister of the Armed Forces Vasilevsky. The minister interrupted him:

- This is the order of Comrade Stalin himself - follow it!

A directive was received from the General Staff - to prepare possible options for basing new divisions, as well as proposals for personnel. To carry out the task in the Air Force, a special department was created.

It was necessary to deploy a network of military educational institutions and in the shortest possible time to train at least ten thousand pilots, the same number of navigators and gunners-radio operators. A special construction department is to build hundreds of airfields. Aviation industry - above the plan to produce more than ten thousand bombers. Expenses - incredible, unbearable for the budget!

The officers proceeded from the fact that we must wait for a new war, writes Lieutenant General Nikolai Nikolayevich Ostroumov, who was the Deputy Chief of the General Staff aviation:

"Gradually, the processing of public consciousness was going on, the country was purposefully preparing for the coming trials, or rather, for war. In any case, this is how we assessed the situation, working on the implementation of Stalin's order. Undoubtedly, the order is in many respects strange.

They envisaged only a one-sided development of the Air Force, which was of a pronounced adventurous nature. To our people, who have not yet recovered from the gravest consequences

Great Patriotic War, new, unjustified spending was imposed. The jet bombers that had just appeared in our country were still far from perfect as aircraft carrying nuclear weapons. And consequently, the question of updating the huge fleet of aircraft would soon arise.

Stalin started an arms race in an exhausted country. Deprived the people of normal the life they hoped for after the Victory and to which they had every right.

Much has been written about American plans for a nuclear war against the USSR (the most famous is the Dropshot plan). The same was built by our General Staff officers. Washington was not going to attack the Soviet Union. Yes, and there was nothing. Soviet intelligence had fairly accurate data on the state of atomic affairs in the United States and knew that the United States had a small stockpile of nuclear weapons.

A few years later, at a plenum of the Central Committee, one of Stalin's comrades-in-arms, chairman Council of Ministers, Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bulganin, will say:

- In the last years before Stalin's death, we had a very difficult international situation. In relations with the Western powers and the United States, we stood on the brink of war.

In 1945, the 126th Light Mountain Rifle Red Banner Order of Bogdan Khmelnitsky Corps was transferred to Chukotka (see Military History Journal, No. 6/2014). The headquarters is located in Providence Bay. In 1948, the 14th Army began to form on its basis. The commander was appointed who had just graduated from the Higher Military Academy named after K.E. Voroshilov, Lieutenant General Nikolai Nikolaevich Oleshev, a former border guard who proved himself a combined arms commander in the war. He received the "Gold Star" of the Hero of the Soviet Union for participating in the defeat of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria.

Barracks for airborne units and airfields for long-range bombers were built in Chukotka, a military base in Igarka, and military depots in Providence Bay. The 95th mixed aviation division was deployed in Chukotka, it was given civilian airports, two meteorological stations, a separate radio engineering platoon and a separate ionospheric station to monitor US nuclear tests.

Along the entire Arctic Ocean, a railroad was being pulled, and railroad tracks were being pulled up to Kamchatka. The goal was to immediately transfer the war to the territory of the United States.

In 1950, on behalf of the Central Committee, the Khabarovsk regional committee of the party checked the state of formations and units of the army and navy in Chukotka. The Khabarovsk Territory was constantly growing. It also included the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk region and the Kuril Islands.

Alexander Pavlovich Efimov, who was transferred from Irkutsk, was approved as the first secretary of the regional committee (the former owner of Khabarovsk, Roman Kapitonovich Nazarov, was removed from the apparatus: with a big decrease he was sent as secretary of the party committee of a spinning and weaving factory in the Ivanovo region).

"By nature, Efimov was a rather reserved person," recalled his subordinate. I don't remember ever seeing him animated, smiling. He was distinguished by great willpower and a strong character ... He loved to play dominoes, but he was terribly worried about losses. He was accompanied by two messengers -

state security officers. Then even the first secretaries had personal protection. One guard, a proven player, sat down to play with the owner, and the second - with the guest, and the guest, no matter how hard he tried, was still doomed to lose.

The new owner of the region reported to Moscow: difficult living conditions, not enough fuel and electricity, military units are poorly supplied. Airfields are not ready to receive bombers: there is no fuel, communications, radars.

After the war, the Pacific Fleet was divided - the 5th fleet was based in Vladivostok, the 7th - in Sovetskaya Gavan. In Chukotka, they created a base for the 7th fleet. But the service is here

taken as a punishment.

On October 24, 1951, the Politburo approved the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the operational network of airfields on the Moscow-Khabarovsk air route." It was intended to complete the construction of an airfield in Providence Bay by the end of 1952. The airfields were supposed to receive Tu-4 and Il-28 aircraft.

The Tu-4 strategic bomber was copied by Andrei Nikolaevich Tupolev from the American B-29 at Stalin's direction. It entered service with the Long-Range Aviation in 1949. Equipped with an in-flight refueling system, it could fly to the territory of the United States and bring down on them nuclear bombs developed under the guidance of academician Yuli Borisovich Khariton.

Il-28 became the first jet bomber capable of carrying nuclear weapons. For its development, Sergei Vladimirovich Ilyushin received another Stalin Prize.

Stalin was not afraid of nuclear war. The Americans didn't have that many nuclear weapons back then. There were no rockets yet, the only means of delivery was heavy bombers. The generals convinced Stalin that the air defense system was capable of intercepting most of the American bombers. So the Americans will not succeed in destroying the Soviet Union from the air. Losses as a result of a nuclear strike, of course, will be large, but this did not bother Stalin: the country is huge, there will be enough people. But for the Americans, the very first nuclear strike, according to the leader, will be crushing. There will be panic, and the Americans will capitulate.

Stalin did not consider them good soldiers, he believed that the Americans were cowards, he said dismissively: they were used to comfort and safety.

"The American soldier is a speculator, he is engaged in buying and selling," Stalin said on August 20, 1952, to the head of the Chinese government, Zhou Enlai, who arrived from Beijing. - What is this power? The Americans are generally not capable of waging a big war. They want to conquer the whole world, but they can't handle little Korea. They don't know how to fight. They hope for an atomic bomb, air raids. But this war cannot be won. We need infantry, and they have few infantry, and it is weak. They are at war with little Korea, but in the USA they are already crying. What will happen if they start a big war? Then, perhaps, everyone will cry.

Valentin Mikhailovich Falin, a well-known diplomat and later secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU for international affairs, recalled: "Someday, according to the documents, we may find out how far the creation of the Soviet potential for a preemptive strike has progressed. Based on what came to me through second hands, I will only note - the dictator died by the way.

The war on the Korean Peninsula became a training ground for Soviet pilots. In Korea, the Air Force not only went through a combat run-in, but also got used to shooting at the Americans. Stalin was going to fight the war on par with Mao Zedong, whose divisions in Korea fought the American troops.

"Mao Zedong," the Soviet ambassador to China reported to Moscow, "said that they are learning a lot from the experience of the war in Korea, how to organize a modern army and how to wage war against modern imperialist armies."

The belief that Americans were weaklings was widespread in Soviet society. On February 4, 1950, the author of The Optimistic Tragedy and captain of the 1st rank, playwright Vsevolod Vitalyevich Vishnevsky, wrote to the deputy editor-in-chief of the Novy Mir magazine, literary critic Anatoly Kuzmich Tarasenkov: "The enemies stubbornly lead a course towards conflict. The United States and Europe have spent ten times more in the past five years than Hitler spent in 1933-1939. to the war. But we have two of the best armies in the world: the Soviet and the People's Army of China. The soldiers of these armies know no rivals in the field. These are not American junkies from the "Willis" and craftsmen with chewing gum, condoms, etc. Our technology is advancing irresistibly. We won't be taken by surprise

22nd of June. But I believe that the United States and others will not immediately risk a war. Malenkov clearly promised them that he would visit America (speech on November 6, 1949). Understood. They will also think about the rear in Europe."

And in parallel, there was an education of hatred for the United States, the West, in general, for everything foreign. The apparatus of the Central Committee drew up a "Plan of measures to propagate the ideas of Soviet patriotism among the population." It said:

"In all political work, it is necessary to insistently emphasize that there is no other nation today that would have such great services to humanity as the Soviet people have... It is necessary to reveal the spiritual impoverishment of the people of the bourgeois world, their ideological emptiness... It is necessary to show the corruption of morals in capitalist society, the moral degradation of the people of the bourgeois world. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize the moral superiority and spiritual beauty of the Soviet man, who works for the benefit of the whole society.

The work on the education of Soviet patriotism should be based on Comrade Stalin's instruction that even "the last Soviet citizen, free from the chains of capitalism, stands head and shoulders above any foreign high-ranking bureaucrat, dragging the yoke of capitalist slavery on his shoulders."

On May 11, 1949, the Committee for Arts under the Council of Ministers of the USSR reported to Malenkov:

"In accordance with the instructions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on conducting anti-American propaganda, the following measures were taken. The entire repertoire of pop artists (colloquial genre) has been drastically restructured. Basically, he is subordinated to the exposure of the policy of warmongers, double-dealing, deceit and moral impoverishment of American leaders.

All entertainers and satirical artists of Moscow, Leningrad and Kyiv direct their performances of reprises, couplets, feuilletons, parodies, interludes and skits to expose the double-dealing policy of American and other warmongers.

Work is underway to create a special concert in the Hall of Columns of the House of the Unions under the code name "Let's Talk About America", in which the repertoire of all performers will reflect the mores, life and anti-people activities of the American government and, in contrast, highly patriotic works reflecting the peaceful policy of the Soviet Union.

In order to strengthen anti-American propaganda, the Central Circus ordered a large number of works of small forms for all circus artists of the conversational genre.

A lot of hacks rubbed their hands - new opportunities for good earnings opened up. If the publishing house was slow to release a very inferior book, they immediately turned to the higher authorities with a complaint about the clamping down of a patriotic writer.

One author submitted to the Moskovsky Rabochiy publishing house a manuscript titled "The American Gestapo" devoted to "the system of domestic political espionage and police terror in the United States." The publishing editor stated: the manuscript is based

"on speculation and fabrication."

The author turned to Molotov: the publishing house is in no hurry to publish a book on such a politically sensitive topic! Molotov forwarded the letter to the Secretary of the Central Committee, Suslov. The manuscript was sent for viewing to the Minister of State Security Abakumov. The minister replied that "when preparing the manuscript, the author used classified materials, which it is inappropriate to talk about in the open press. The author's apartment kept secret materials about American intelligence. All these materials have been seized by the security agencies."

Are the "closed" materials about American intelligence? But it was not the CIA documents obtained by our intelligence that were meant at all, but articles from the American press that should have been kept secret from the Soviet people ... Abakumov's opinion was neglected. The title of the book - "The American Gestapo" - was so liked by the Central Committee that the book in 1950

came out into the light.

The campaign, which lasted for many years, caused incredible damage to the country, because turned into a systematic destruction of domestic science.

The session of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, which marked the complete victory of the hoaxer Trofim Lysenko, was also held as part of the general struggle against cosmopolitanism and foreignness, which Stalin made his ideological

flag in the postwar years.

At an expanded meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences, it was decided to support the conclusions of the VASKhNIL session and to close entire laboratories, which were declared centers of reactionary Morganism! The same decision was made by the Academy of Medical Sciences.

The Minister of Higher Education Sergei Vasilievich Kaftanov signed several orders for the dismissal of major scientists and professors from all universities in the country who did not join Lysenko. All these were the most famous names in biology. Kaftanov did not stop there. He ordered the universities "within two months to review the composition of all departments of biological faculties, clearing them of people who are hostile to Michurin biology, and strengthening these cadres with Michurin biologists."

Sergei Kaftanov taught chemistry at the Higher Communist Agricultural School. As a young man in 1937, he was hired by the apparatus of the Central Committee and almost immediately put in charge of higher education in the country. He sang well, they say, the leader liked his voice.

Genetics as a science was canceled. Outstanding scientists such as Academician Ivan Ivanovich Shmalgauzen, President of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus Roman Andreevich Zhebrak (arranged a "trial of honor" over him, accused him of anti-state and anti-patriotic actions), Academician Nikolai Petrovich Dubinin (future Hero of Socialist Labor and laureate of the Lenin Prize) were left without work), Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences Iosif Abramovich Rapoport (also the future Hero of Socialist Labor and laureate of the Lenin Prize) ...

The same purge was carried out in agricultural, medical and veterinary institutes.

Yuri Zhdanov corrected himself and suggested that the leader conduct an equally successful campaign in physiology under the slogan of protecting the scientific heritage of Academician Pavlov. On October 6, 1949, Stalin instructed Yuri Zhdanov:

"I agree with your arguments and am even ready to cube them.

Now something about the tactics of dealing with opponents of the ak theory. Pavlova. We must first collect secretly the supporters of AK. Pavlov, to organize them by assigning roles, and only after that to convene the very meeting of physiologists that you are talking about, and where it will be necessary to give the opponents a general battle. Without this, you can fail. Remember: the enemy must be beaten for sure with the expectation of complete success.

On June 28, 1950, a joint session of the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Medical Sciences was held, convened at the behest of the ideological authorities. Serious scientists listened with longing to the reports, which testified, as one of the members of the Presidium of the Academy of Medical Sciences put it, to a complete gap between the introduced doctrine and genuine medicine; about the growing lag behind world science.

Academy President Sergei Ivanovich Vavilov concluded his speech with the words:

- Long live the leader of the peoples, the great scientist and our teacher in all the most important undertakings Comrade Stalin!

Saying all this, Sergei Vavilov knew that his brother, an outstanding geneticist, Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov, brought to prison (where he will die) by Lysenko and his fans!

Everyone clapped enthusiastically, realizing that Soviet doctors were being forced to do some stupid things, while, as one of the leaders of the Academy of Medical Sciences wrote, "large events are taking place in medicine abroad: more and more advanced antibiotics, new vitamins and hormones are being discovered (including cortisone), antihypertensive drugs, bold heart surgery was proposed.

The decisions of the academies were immediately implemented. Here's what it looked like.
On the territory of the Frunzensky district of Moscow there were thirty scientific

research institutes: seventeen medical, nine technical, four humanitarian. The first secretary of the district committee of the party Ekaterina Alekseevna Furtseva, the future Minister of Culture of the USSR, took up the purge of scientific personnel.

- In a number of institutions, - Furtseva informed her comrades in the party leadership, - reactionary views of Weismannism-Morganism were widespread among a certain part of scientific workers. At the Institute of Forensic Psychiatry, at the First and Second Medical Institutes, the leadership of some laboratories and departments was in the hands of supporters of Weismannism. The discussion of the decisions of the VASKhNIL session helped the institutes to restructure the direction of scientific work and strengthen the composition of scientific institutions by leading Soviet scientists - followers of Michurin biology ...

Revised curricula. Textbooks and scientific papers written by Lysenko's opponents, that is, real scientists, were banned. The chemical department of the Academy of Sciences also held its session in imitation of Lysenko's. The persecution of the best biologists in the country, the reprisals against geneticists were supplemented by the defeat of chemical science.

There was no one to teach future doctors and pharmacists. The place of scientists in institutes and universities was occupied by poorly educated functionaries or charlatans, supported by the authorities, as they fought against "hostile Western theories", and their opponents were accused of kowtowing before America.

"We are forced to listen to the crazy old woman Lepeshinsky, who discovered "living matter," Academician Alexander Leonidovich Myasnikov was indignant. - This Baba Yaga, it turns out, is Stalin's comrade-in-arms in party work before the revolution, she asked him for support, and "appropriate instructions" were given. Lepeshinskaya was elevated to a genius.

In 1950, the old Bolshevik Olga Borisovna Lepeshinskaya, who became interested in medicine, was awarded the Stalin Prize and admitted to the Academy of Medical Sciences. She recommended chicken protein to treat stomach ulcers, arthritis, and cancer. She assured that baths with soda according to her prescription would save from hypertension, sclerosis and, in general, from old age! She promised almost immortality. And what? Soda disappeared from sale ...

"The population believed in her statements about the benefits of special baths," the writer Yuri Karlovich Olesha sadly noted in his diary. "Her recipes on tissue paper began to circulate. People returned home after her lectures excited, believing in longevity.

Lepeshinskaya was not alone!

Veterinarian Gevorg Mnatsakanovich Boshyan published the book "On the nature of viruses and microbes" in 1949. He claimed that his discoveries would change modern medicine. And he was just an adventurer. He preached something monstrous in illiteracy, but called for a fight "against cosmopolitanism in science, for the ideas of Lenin-Stalin" and received the support of the highest authorities. Boshyan was put in charge of the secret laboratory of the Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology named after N.F. Gamaleya, he was awarded the scientific degree of Doctor of Medical Sciences and the title of professor.

The triumph of manic ignoramus!

Vetfeldsher Dorokhov dissolved cattle horns in nitric acid and offered this poison to cancer patients. Technician Kalugin preached treatment with salts of heavy metals. Microbiologist Troitskaya administered an extract from cancer cells as a vaccine to patients. And in the atmosphere of madness that engulfed the country, the sick were drawn to these mystifiers in a string.

From the defeat, which lasted several years, domestic science never recovered. The results are tangible to this day: the incredible backwardness of the entire agricultural sector. The destruction of intellectual potential determined the backlog of medicine and pharmaceuticals. Diagnostic tools, medical equipment, medicines - everything has to be purchased. Officials in the health department can tear their imported shirts and say that our medicine is the best. But there is a reliable indicator. Despite the existence of a whole system of medicine for the authorities, our

top officials and oligarchs go abroad for treatment.

The Yugoslav communist Milovan Djilas was surprised to see what was happening in the Soviet Union, which until recently seemed to him a role model: "The superiority of the Russians was exhibited and acquired an ugly comic appearance. At every step, hitherto unknown sides of Soviet reality were revealed to us: backwardness, primitiveness, chauvinism, great power, of course, along with heroic, superhuman attempts to overcome all this and subordinate it to the normal course of life.

Konstantin Simonov recalled how Stalin assembled the leadership of the Writers' Union. AND spoke of "an unjustified admiration for foreign culture."

This tradition comes from Peter. Peter had good thoughts, but soon there were too many Germans, it was a period of admiration for the Germans. First the Germans, then the French, there was admiration for foreign assholes. - Stalin allowed himself to joke. - The military also had such admiration. Now it's less...

In the forty-first year, Stalin remembered the heroic history of Russia, called to his aid the shadow of great ancestors. And after the war he spoke about them without any reverence. There is only one leader whom art should exalt, and that is himself.

The leader inspired the cinematographers:

- The wisdom of Ivan the Terrible was that he stood on the national point of view and did not let foreigners into his country, he protected the country from foreign influence.

Stalin didn't know much about history. Just on the orders of Ivan the Terrible in Germany, masters of various specialties were recruited and lured to Russia. And among the guardsmen, his personal guard, the percentage of foreigners was very high.

In the Western way of life, Ivan the Terrible did not like the same things that Stalin did: people's rule, that is, democracy. When Ivan the Terrible turned to the British Queen, Elizabeth replied that the decision would be made by Parliament. The Moscow sovereign remarked disdainfully: "We hoped that in your state you are a sovereign and you yourself own and take care of your sovereign honor ... But, apparently, in your country, besides you, other people own, and not only people, but trading peasants, and not take care of our sovereign heads ... But you stay in your girlish rank, like a simple girl.

But here's what's funny. Ivan the Terrible constantly lived in fear. In early September 1567, he invited the British envoy and asked him to convey something important to the queen. Forbidden to trust the message to paper! The ambassador himself went to London and here he said: Ivan the Terrible asks the queen to grant him asylum - "to save himself and his family." As you can see, the custom of seeking asylum in England has long roots...

According to Simonov, "Stalin treated both cruelly and painfully everything that in total he invested in the concept of "obedience to foreign countries." After the war won, in a devastated, hungry victorious country, this was his sore point.

Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov, who was in charge of the indoctrination of the country, explained why Stalin demanded a fight against foreign influence:

"Millions have been abroad. They saw something that made them think. And they want to have good apartments (they have seen what it is in the West), eat well, dress well. People say: go to hell, all politics. We just want to live well, earn money, breathe freely, and have a good rest. But people do not understand that the path to this lies through the right policy. That is why moods of apoliticality and lack of ideas are so dangerous. These sentiments are even more dangerous when complemented by servility to the West.

The leader explained that the number one task was to end the worship of foreigners:

- It is necessary to hammer at this point for many years, for ten years it is necessary to hammer this topic.

Hammered! And they were largely successful.

Stalin gave simple answers to all questions. Academician Alexey Dmitrievich

Speransky once wrote admiringly: "He is not afraid of repetition. Moreover, he is looking for them. They are in his service. He, like a nail, nails to consciousness what is a formula behaviour."

Nails driven into the head relieve unnecessary thoughts and doubts.

Sometimes anti-American actions bordered on insanity. Extract from the resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of 1950: "Approve the draft note submitted by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the US government in connection with the dropping of the Colorado potato beetle by American aircraft on the territory of the German Democratic Republic."

The atmosphere became more and more oppressive. On February 15, 1947, the Politburo ordered the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to adopt a decree "On the prohibition of marriages between citizens of the USSR and foreigners." At the direction of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth generally forbade Soviet young people to correspond with foreign youth - even from socialist countries.

Attempts to look behind the iron curtain - without special permission - were not allowed even to prominent officials. On May 22, 1947, the head of the foreign policy department of the Central Committee of the party, Mikhail Andreevich Suslov, reported to his superiors:

"In the USSR Ministry of the Coal Industry, films received from the British Embassy were viewed in the premises of the Ministry and in the apartment of the Minister Comrade Zasyadko. These screenings were organized by the deputy director of affairs of the Ministry, a member of the CPSU (b) Ya. Schrager, who personally maintained contact with the British embassy through an employee of the editorial board of the British Ally, a Soviet citizen Yu.L. Cher.

Department of Foreign Policy of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks in early April of this year. reported on the connections of the Ministry of the Coal Industry with the British Embassy in the Ministry of State Security of the USSR (comrade Pitovranov). A few days later, Comrade Pitovranov reported that the above facts were confirmed and Yu.L. Cher has been arrested and is currently under investigation."

The British Ally is a weekly newspaper published by the British Ministry of Information since the war for the Russian reader. Yuri Lvovich Sher knew several languages, he was a professional translator. He sat in Ekibastuz, in the camp to which the convicted artillery officer Alexander Isaevich Solzhenitsyn was also brought.

Contact with a foreign embassy and watching foreign feature films were seen as an anti-state crime. Soviet officials understood the warning and shied away from foreigners like hell from incense. They tried to keep the children of diplomats - proven comrades - away from the Western infection.

In 1950, the minutes of the meeting of the Politburo recorded:

"Question of the Commission for Traveling Abroad under the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks.

1. Consider it inappropriate to send school-age children abroad for summer holidays. Oblige the Main Directorate of Soviet Property Abroad ... to provide these children with a normal rest in pioneer camps, sanatoriums and rest homes in the USSR.

2. Propose to the Commission for Travel Abroad to allow travel abroad for summer holidays for children of school age only in exceptional cases.

In June 1948, Ekaterina Furtseva convened a plenum of the Frunze District Committee. The question "On the work of party organizations of scientific institutions and higher education institutions of the region in the implementation of Comrade Stalin's instructions on the further development of science" was discussed. They invited the heads of scientific institutions of the region and arranged for them what in those years was called pumping.

- The district committee of the party, - said Ekaterina Alekseevna, - checking how the instructions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks are being carried out, I heard reports from the secretaries of the party organizations of a number of institutions. The main shortcomings are the weak formulation of the ideological and political education of scientific workers. The Communists of the Institute of Biochemistry criticized the book of Professor

Rubinshtein "General Physiology", in which the presentation of materials was based on the uncritical use of the works of bourgeois authors. The significance of the classics of Russian and world science, Sechenov and Pavlov, was completely ignored ...

At the Institute of Legal Sciences, Furtseva reported, the party organization had uncovered gross political errors in the scientific work of professors Osherovich, Shifman, and Gurvich. For many years, the former head of a section of the Gurvich Institute praised foreign legal science and did not show the fundamental difference and advantage of Soviet democracy over bourgeois democracy. Particularly serious mistakes were made in the work of the party bureau of the Institute for the Organization of Public Health and the History of Medicine. The Communists of the institute did not expose the cosmopolitan views of the former deputy for science, Professor Strashun, in a timely manner. Contrary to historical truth, he portrayed the great Russian surgeon Pirogov as convinced

Westerner...

Not only professional party workers, but also eminent scientists uttered the same nonsense. Then they made excuses:

"The pressure was on us from such high spheres that we writhed like eels on a frying pan. After my speech, I rinsed my mouth for three days.

Not for ten years, as Stalin ordered, but for much longer they instilled hatred for foreign countries, the West, and America in the first place. They successfully introduced into the mass consciousness distrust of everything alien. Academic institutions wrote pseudo-scientific works about a global conspiracy against our people.

All this was accompanied by immoderate self-praise.

How can one not believe in one's own superiority and high spirituality, if this is repeated at every step! A struggle was unfolded against "cow-worship before the West." Everything that came from Western countries, even in the exact sciences, was called reactionary. Scholars had to cross out references to foreign authors. In such a primitive way, the priority of domestic science was affirmed. It got to the point of absurdity.

"It was not even supposed to quote foreign authors," recalled Academician Alexander Myasnikov, "the editors still had to cross out their names, since Soviet science is advanced and only a non-Soviet person can 'bow before foreigners.'" Even the name of some diagnostic signs or techniques began to be "Russified". Erb's point for listening to aortic diastolic murmur was renamed Botkin's point (which, referring to Erb, indicated its significance); Bittorf's symptom became Tushinsky's symptom, although Mikhail Dmitrievich himself did not think to attribute Bittorf's discovery to himself. The "Konchalovsky symptom" appeared, although it was a well-known Rumpel-L food symptom. There was a shameless robbery of international science and thieves attributing its discoveries to domestic scientists (of course, without their consent).

In 1948, at the Military Red Banner Academy of Communications named after S.M. Budyonny discussed the work of the future creator of the first missile defense system and corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences Grigory Vasilyevich Kisunko. His book was nominated for the Stalin Prize. But the head of the department of the foundations of Marxism-Leninism showed vigilance, said that in Kisunko's book only in the preface it is said about the priority of domestic science, and in the book itself there are entirely foreign names: Maxwell, Helmholtz, Hertz ... The Academic Council of the Academy canceled the nomination of the book for the award.

Physics was next.

The discovery of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics changed physics. It has become incomprehensible to many. Physicists were divided into those who understood modern science and were able to work in the atomic project, and those who turned out to be professionally unsuitable. And all this, as if for selection, were the right comrades who did not doubt the line of the party and government.

The creation of the Soviet atomic bomb almost failed - for the same reason that

Nazi Germany lost its nuclear weapons. We also found scientists who opposed Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics as "hostile doctrines."

In the spring of 1947, the Literaturnaya Gazeta published an article "On a Philosophical Centaur," written by Alexander Maksimov, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences. He taught philosophy at Moscow State University. Maksimov denounced quantum mechanics, calling it "idealistic". In Party parlance, this was a dangerous accusation.

Minister of Higher Education Kaftanov reported to Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Marshal Voroshilov: "It is necessary to resolutely expose the currents hostile to Marxism-Leninism, penetrating through physics into higher educational institutions ... The role of Russian and Soviet scientists in the development of physics is completely insufficiently shown in textbooks; books are full of names of foreign scientists.

"Party physicists" who liked the bosses wrote articles "against reactionary Einsteinianism in physics." Quantum mechanics was called "idealistic" and alien to Soviet science. Under their ignorance summed up the ideological base. It was argued that "for Soviet physics, the fight against cringing before the West, the cultivation of a sense of national pride" is of particular importance. Proponents of the theory of relativity were accused of lack of patriotism.

Mediocre physicists concentrated at Moscow University and complained to the ideological authorities. Especially annoying was the abundance of Jewish surnames among the creators of nuclear weapons. This gave hope that righteous anger would be heard from above. At the methodological seminar, the teachers of the Faculty of Physics smashed outstanding scientists to smithereens - for "objectivism, an uncritical attitude to the views of bourgeois physicists." Academician Abram Ioffe got it for philosophical mistakes in reasoning about the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics, academician Leonid Mandelstam - for "idealistic views on the main problems of modern physics."

Abram Fedorovich Ioffe, vice-president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, devoted his life to the creation of a world-class physics school and brought up a whole galaxy of outstanding scientists who glorified the country. Leonid Isaakovich Mandelstam, who was awarded the Stalin Prize, was all the more upset by illiterate criticism, since it was through his efforts that the Physics Department was created at Moscow State University in the thirties.

Since the war, the rector of Moscow University was a prominent historian, Professor Ilya Savvich Galkin. At first, he liked the dean of the Faculty of Physics, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences Alexander Savvich Predvoditelev. But later the rector of the university saw with chagrin that "the dean's judgments do not fit into the rapidly developing scientific atmosphere, his reaction to the scientific explosion in physical science turned out to be clearly inhibited. Sincerely defending the merits of the Russian school of physicists, he saw in the new directions of science the destruction of domestic traditions and admiration for the West.

The rector's arguments in favor of the development of modern areas of physics at the university the dean of the faculty rejected it. Galkin decided that the words of the historian were unconvincing:

- What do you, humanists, understand in the natural sciences!

But the vice-rector of the university, academician-mathematician Ivan Matveyevich Vinogradov, also turned out to be insufficiently authoritative. Galkin consulted with Sergei Ivanovich Vavilov, president of the USSR Academy of Sciences and director of the Physics Institute. Vavilov fully supported him. As well as the head of the atomic project, Igor Vasilievich Kurchatov, who concurrently was a professor at Moscow State University.

Galkin was convinced that he was right: the glaring backlog of the Physics Department of Moscow State University from modern requirements is unacceptable. He wanted Dean Predvoditelev to report to the academic council of the university. But he ran into stiff resistance from influential characters. The party committee of Moscow State University played a special role. The secretary of the party committee since 1943 was an associate professor

Faculty of Physics Vasily Fedorovich Nozdrev, who before that worked as a party organizer of the Central Committee at one of the defense plants.

"The new directions allegedly contradict the national school - this outwardly patriotic, but essentially anti-scientific motive, supported by the secretary of the party committee of Moscow State University, associate professor V. Nozdrev, disoriented the scientists of the faculty," Galkin recalled.

The Party Committee of Moscow University acted as a district committee, the secretary was a prominent figure, he was supported by the Moscow party authorities. Nozdrev, according to the rector of Moscow State University, "continued to rage": "He told me that I was misled by Academician L.D. Landau, and this led me to the path of "cosmopolitanism" and "admiration for the bourgeois West." I stoically withstood Nozdrev's "party-psychological" attacks, but he did not dare to openly condemn the "cosmopolitan" rector at the party committee.

In the spring of 1946, Alexander Predvoditelev was released from the leadership of the faculty. But the atmosphere there has not changed. A year later, at the Academic Council of the Faculty of Physics, they heard a report "On the Patriotic Duty of Soviet Scientists", which was delivered by the Acting Dean, Professor Vladimir Nikolaevich Kessenikh. He expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that individual professors use translated textbooks and hush up the contribution of Russian scientists. He offered to speak exclusively in Russian at international congresses:

– Is it worthy for Soviet scientists to participate in foreign scientific societies? Make a report in English? The question is not at all accidental, because it is one of the methods of everyday influence on consciousness and a method that very easily leads to the cultivation of a consciousness of dependence and subordination.

He was enthusiastically supported by his colleagues:

– After the Soviet Union, under the leadership of the great Stalin, gained colossal international prestige and the Russian language became international, it is not befitting for Soviet scientists to continue to publish their works in English just to make it easier for foreign scientists to study our works.

In the decision of the academic council, they wrote that at Moscow State University "cases of manifestation of servility and admiration for foreign science have not been eliminated." The Scientific Council of the Faculty of Physics also condemned the USSR Academy of Sciences for ignoring university physicists, and found the reason - these are the machinations of cosmopolitan academicians.

The names were listed: Vladimir Alexandrovich Fok (Stalin Prize winner and future Lenin Prize winner Hero of Socialist Labor), Lev Davidovich Landau (future Nobel Prize winner), Mikhail Alexandrovich Leontovich (future Lenin Prize winner) and Vitaly Lazarevich Ginzburg (future Nobel Prize winner). All four are outstanding scientists who have glorified domestic science; real patriots, they made an invaluable contribution to the strengthening of the state.

Who now remembers the names of those who insulted and accused them? But that's little consolation because at that time they arranged for themselves a beautiful life, demanding the blood of the great.

The dean of the Faculty of Physics, Kessenikh, called Academician Abram Ioffe a "rootless cosmopolitan" who acts "not for the benefit of the Soviet people."

"The slavish admiration of some of our scientists for Western bourgeois science has its own "theoretical base," Nozdryov was indignant. – This "theoretical base" of servility is cosmopolitanism. In our age of gigantic battles, unprecedented in history, between the forces of democracy and the forces of reaction, the struggle against cosmopolitanism has a particularly acute political character.

He, in turn, called "a rootless cosmopolitan, alien to his people, his homeland" Pyotr Leonidovich Kapitsa (twice winner of the Stalin Prize and future Nobel Prize in Physics):

– Academician Kapitsa became the conductor of the sabotage and ideological work that the ideologists of cosmopolitanism, the servants of imperialism, are trying in vain to carry out in our country.

Nozdryov demanded:

- It is urgent to release the editorial offices of physical journals and publishing houses, commissions for the Stalin Prizes, expert commissions, and so on from cosmopolitan physicists who are causing great harm to the development of physical science in our country.

This was the meaning of this attack: to clear places for our own, for the right ones!

"The dense, pseudoscientific approach to solving scientific problems at Moscow University," wrote Professor Galkin, "was revealed by a commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Nozdrev was removed from Moscow State University.

The former secretary of the party committee was not offended. Vasily Nozdrev safely moved to the Moscow Regional Pedagogical Institute named after N.K. Krupskaya, who in 1960 headed. He wrote poetry, published in the magazines "Our Contemporary", "Young Guard", "October". The author of a recent work on Nozdryov respectfully calls him "a learned encyclopedist, a poet-thinker, a bearer of Russian spiritual and intellectual culture."

Sergei Vavilov, president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, thought differently. On April 16, 1947, he wrote in his diary: "The day before yesterday in the evening - seven hours of continuous Academic Council of Moscow University: about physicists. My God, what a terrible and disgusting Okhotnoryadsky spectacle. The root is Timiryazev, aged and even more stupid and degraded. Then the failed geniuses Nozdrev - Akulov, who broke loose from the chain, just crazy Vlasov, a mixture of illiteracy, arrogance, Moscow merchant cunning and tavern jargon. On this basis, physicists must grow in this swamp. You have to be a very big person to get out of here healthy and strong."

Who brought the President of the Academy of Sciences to despair?

Arkady Klimentievich Timiryazev, the adopted son of the famous biologist Timiryazev, headed the Department of the History of Physics at the Faculty of Physics and became famous for his complete rejection of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics.

Professor Nikolai Sergeevich Akulov was the first to start a fight against cosmopolitans in physics. He attacked Pyotr Kapitsa and Leonid Mandelstam, whom he called a German spy: he advised the Telefunken firm - even before the First World War.

Professor Anatoly Alexandrovich Vlasov headed the Department of Theoretical Physics when Dean Predvoditelev did not allow Igor Evgenyevich Tamm, the future academician, Nobel Prize winner and Hero of Socialist Labor, to be made the head. Igor Tamm made a huge contribution to the development of quantum mechanics and nuclear physics, which were simply incomprehensible to either the dean of the faculty or the secretary of the party committee.

Already the former dean of the Faculty of Physics, Predvoditelev, also condemned the president of the Academy of Sciences, Sergei Vavilov, who in his report did not concentrate on the problem

cosmopolitanism:

- How can such questions - questions of cosmopolitanism - be bypassed? It seems to me that this question should be raised to its full potential in Sergei Ivanovich's report. It is impossible to pass by, if we also take into account that the question of cosmopolitanism is touched upon in the entire cultural life of our country: in literature, in painting, in the visual arts. Everywhere they talk about it, but for us, physicists, as if this moment does not exist, everything is peaceful and smooth with us.

Galkin could not stand it and turned to Minister Kaftanov with a request to release him from the post of rector: "I was guided by the desire to preserve human dignity, although, strictly speaking, I showed cowardice. I was broken. After all, I was aware that after my departure, geneticists would be put under attack, and supporters of Predvoditelev would receive support.

The rector could not prevent the arrival of the Lysenkoites to the biological faculty, which was demanded by both the ministry and the new secretary of the party committee of Moscow State University - "Associate Professor E.M. Sergeev, who headed the party organization after Nozdrev, believed that it was necessary to allow Lysenkoites into Moscow State University, and not be guided by cosmopolitan geneticists.

Associate Professor of the Department of Soil Science of the Faculty of Geology and Soil Science Evgeniy Mikhailovich Sergeev defended his thesis on the topic "The heat of soil wetting". Party work will help him defend his doctoral dissertation. In time, he will become an academic.

The angry speeches of the fighters against modern physics were heard. The head of the science department of the Central Committee, Yuri Zhdanov, the son of a member of the Politburo and son-in-law of Stalin, reported to his superiors: "Among theoreticians of physicists and physical chemists, a monopoly group has formed: Landau, Leontovich, Frumkin, Frenkel, Ginzburg, Lifshitz, Grinberg, Frank, Kompaneets and others. All theoretical departments of physical and physical-chemical institutes are staffed by supporters of this group, representatives of Jewish nationality. For example, the school of Academician Landau includes eleven Doctors of Science; they are all Jews and non-Party... Laboratories in which work is carried out on special topics are headed by eighty percent of the Jews.

The scientists listed by the younger Zhdanov brought world fame to Soviet science and played an important role in the creation of nuclear missile weapons. However, the head of the science department of the Central Committee was not only not grateful to the people who had done so much for the motherland, but also demanded racial purges, which had taken place in Nazi Germany a few years before.

The agitprop of the Central Committee signaled to the leaders: the president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Sergei Vavilov, demanded the study of foreign scientific literature, and renounced classical physics.

Vavilov was forced to listen to the opinion of his superiors. Preparations began for the All-Union Conference of Physicists, which was supposed to repeat the success of the "People's Academician" Trofim Denisovich Lysenko in biological science. The decision to hold it was made by the secretariat of the Central Committee on December 4, 1948 - to overcome "shortcomings" in the teaching and study of physics. The head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee, Dmitry Trofimovich Shepilov, was entrusted with preparing the meeting.

The organizing committee has already met, which revealed the "shortcomings" of physical science, which, in the situation of the struggle against cosmopolitanism, opened up wide opportunities for getting rid of scientific opponents. It was agreed that the conference would be held in the last week of January 1949. The date had to be changed. Kaftanov and Vavilov reported to Malenkov that a Moscow regional party conference and a Komsomol congress were scheduled for those days.

On January 31, the secretariat of the Central Committee rescheduled the meeting for March 21-27.

Chairman of the organizing committee, Deputy Minister of Higher Education of the USSR Alexander Vasilyevich Topchiev, recent director of the Moscow Oil Institute named after I.M. Gubkin, explained the task:

- Our meeting should be at the level of the VASKhNIL session.

Professor Vladimir Kessenikh urged his colleagues:

- An example for us is the healing storm of the VASKhNIL session.

But the meeting did not take place.

It is believed that Soviet physics was saved by the atomic bomb. Unlike envious but illiterate ideologists, the head of the atomic project, Professor Igor Kurchatov, understood the significance of the theory of relativity. He turned for help to a member of the Politburo and Deputy Prime Minister Beria. Lavrenty Pavlovich asked Kurchatov if it was true that quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity were idealistic.

Kurchatov lucidly explained to Lavrenty Pavlovich:

- If they are banned, then there will be no atomic bomb.

Beria, who understood what awaited him if the bomb failed, rushed to Stalin. For Stalin, the bomb was more important than ideology. The meeting was cancelled.

At the end of March 1949, Minister Kaftanov sent a note to the Central Committee "On major shortcomings in the training of physicists and on measures to eliminate them." And he attached lists of physics teachers to it with an indication of nationality - as if personal data determined the ability to understand modern physics and teach students. But in

By way of exception, physicists were not touched as "useful for the state."

On April 9, 1949, the secretariat of the Central Committee adopted a resolution: "To change the resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of January 31, 1949, to postpone the convening of the All-Union Conference of the Heads of Physics Departments of Higher Educational Institutions and Researchers of the Department of Physical and Mathematical Sciences of the USSR Academy of Sciences due to the unpreparedness of this meeting."

But the dense and aggressive attitude towards modern physics and theoretical physicists persisted. On July 13, 1949, the propaganda and agitation department of the Central Committee signaled to its curator Suslov:

"Today, at the All-Union Conference of the Heads of the Departments of Marxism-Leninism and Philosophy, the report of the President of the USSR Academy of Sciences S.I. Vavilov, Modern Physics and Bourgeois Idealist Philosophy. The text of the report, submitted to the department yesterday, has a number of serious shortcomings, without which the report cannot be read without eliminating them.

Tov. Vavilov holds the idea that even the broadest and most general laws of physics cannot be applied in the study of microphenomena. He speaks about the inapplicability of the concepts of everyday life in atomic physics, it turns out that in the new physics such integral attributes of matter as space and time should be discarded.

Tov. Vavilov does not mention in a word about the decisions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on ideological questions, about the role of the Bolshevik Party in the ideological arming of Soviet physicists. He comes to the wrong conclusion that the ideological foundations of Soviet physics are not advanced in the physics of the whole world. He raises the question of the need to "publish, discuss foreign physical and philosophical literature", silent about the task of creating works on physics, imbued with the spirit of militant party spirit.

We consider it necessary:

- a) Postpone the reading of Comrade Vavilov's report.
- b) Instruct the Minister of Higher Education, Comrade Kaftanov, together with Comrade Vavilov, to eliminate the shortcomings of the report and submit the corrected text to the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks.

The discovery of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics changed not only physics itself. The usual idea of nature, which was formed by classical physics, was destroyed. Of course, theoretical physics remained inaccessible to people who did not have serious knowledge of modern mathematics. Agitprop dogmatists did not want to agree that science is developing rapidly, and continued to be indignant at such outstanding scientists as Vavilov, who operated with the concepts of modern physics.

In June 1952, the newspaper Krasny Fleet (an organ of the Naval Ministry) published an even louder article by Corresponding Member Alexander Maksimov "Against Reactionary Einsteinianism in Physics".

Academician Vladimir Fok turned to Malenkov: "This article can cause serious harm to the development of Soviet science and technology and the education of our youth, as it completely distorts and even denies the physical theory on the basis of which all modern physics develops, including nuclear and atomic physics. "

After the death of Stalin, the disgrace of the "People's Academician" Lysenko, the rehabilitation of cybernetics, open attacks on Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics ceased. But all these people remained in office. They headed departments in higher educational institutions, edited scientific journals, headed scientific publishing houses and research institutes. Deputy Minister Topchiev, who had prepared the meeting of physicists, became the chief scientific secretary of the Academy of Sciences, a man who determined the daily life of the country's scientific community. "Alexander Vasilievich looked impressive," recalled his subordinate, "a powerful figure, a large face with thick black eyebrows, lush hair, insightful dark

eyes. There was something Tatar-Mongolian in his features.

Entire generations of scientific youth attended their lectures and worked under their guidance at research institutes. Doesn't this explain the fact that when the old generation of physicists left, domestic science no longer knew such discoveries and achievements? The pogrom of fundamental science in the last Stalin years determined the state of scientific life in the country for decades.

These were the worst times for domestic science.

The complexity of working on a hydrogen bomb also consisted in the fact that the gigantic temperatures that occur during thermonuclear reactions excluded experiments. But how to check whether physicists are going the right way? Mathematicians were called in to help. They replaced experiments with calculations. "In the development of such complex systems, the role of mathematical calculations is especially great," Academician Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov, the father of the hydrogen bomb, wrote in a secret report.

Physicists marveled at how young mathematicians handled a huge amount of calculations in two years, describing in numbers what should happen inside a nuclear explosive device. It was a titanic work. In the United States, the first computers were already in full use. In the Soviet Union, cybernetics was banned as a bourgeois pseudoscience, so the main calculations were made on paper. The prohibition of cybernetics predetermined the hopeless lag of the country in computer technology. Everything that we use from morning to evening, everything without which modern life seems impossible, is foreign-made.

The intellectual space of life has narrowed to the point of impossibility. The scale of the irreparable damage inflicted on Russian science by hate campaigns is unbelievable. And how the defense of the country suffered!

All this led to the impoverishment of spiritual life. Instead of creative discussions and discussions on the merits of real problems, there are disputes among the hard-nosed, who competed in the selection of quotations from the classics of Marxism.

"Marx said one thing on such and such a question; "late" Engels is different; Lenin - third, - recalled Georgy Valentinovich Shumeiko, who worked for many years in the Central Committee. "This often caused a deadlock... The letters of a confused intellectual to the ideological apparatus of the Central Committee reflected human pain and the hope of getting some kind of explanation... In the thick of the politicized intelligentsia, party and non-party, the initiative to create myths, legends about the immortality of Stalin and his brilliant ideas was in full swing."

Critical reviews about the lectures of Yemelyan Mikhailovich Yaroslavsky, a former major party worker, and then the head of the lecture group of the Central Committee, a member of the editorial board of Pravda and an academician, went to Staraya Square. Vigilant dogmatists signaled that he was giving lectures on the history of the party in the old fashioned way, and they demanded that he strictly follow not only the spirit, but also the letter of the "Short Course in the History of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks" approved by Stalin.

Yaroslavsky was a witness and participant in the revolution, the Civil War, the struggle for power in the twenties. It would seem that what luck for the listeners is to learn everything first hand. But the young party workers did not at all want to know how things really were! It was enough for them to learn the running ideological formulas necessary for a successful career.

Georgy Shumeiko: "Emelyan Yaroslavsky was fond of stories about various stages in the history of the party, filled them with the mention of prominent names, leveling, voluntarily or involuntarily, the role of Stalin with other participants in the revolutionary past."

As a result, at the lectures of Yaroslavsky, who headed the Department of History of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks at the Higher Party School, the audience expressed dissatisfaction and complained about the person who was still a candidate member of the Central Committee:

- Cover the facts on the "Short Course". What you are saying is not found there.

reflections.

Trying to keep calm, Emelyan Mikhailovich answered that he himself was an eyewitness to the events he is talking about.

- You never know! - was heard from the hall. – There is an official interpretation.

A certain type of party worker was being formed, who in the ideological sphere did not allow himself or others to deviate from the general line. This provided a very comfortable existence.

“Over the years of work in the apparatus,” Shumeiko said, “I got used to the discipline that makes it an official norm for comrades to avoid deepening the conversation on an “undesirable topic” or even cut it off for no apparent reason. “Recognized as inappropriate” - that was the end of it!

Raised by Stalin to the top of the party nomenclature, the illiterate and vicious punks felt hatred for everyone who was different. Indifferent officials were replaced either by hysterics with an unhealthy gleam in their eyes, or by infinitely cynical hypocrites.

Painful suspicion - on the one hand. Imitation of real work - on the other. In any ideological campaign there is always a personal and departmental interest. The apparatus is tirelessly engaged in identifying sedition, that which does not correspond to general line, rules and canons. Lives from it! And he lives well, it's not like extracting coal in a mine.

Incredible career prospects have opened up for Losers and Triples. He accused the head of the department, a world-famous scientist, of bowing to the West, and took his place. Nothing that in science is zero, but ours is correct.

The authorities rewarded their henchmen with positions, orders and dachas, but could not make them talented and popular. Therefore, they took part with pleasure in the strangulation and humiliation of ideologically unsustainable talents, cleaning out everything doubtful, castrating any fresh and original thought.

Ideological campaigns give rise to a kind of madness, public insanity. It does not arise by itself, but becomes the result of total propaganda that crushes the spiritual and intellectual life. There is a habit of obedience, a habit of approving and supporting any initiatives and campaigns, no matter how crazy they may be.

The ideological campaigns were all-out, so attempts to remain on the sidelines were unacceptable. But disgust was caused not only by the behavior of officials, but also by the complete approval of this immorality by society! People nodded meaningfully: so it must be so. Power destroyed morality, corrupted people ...

The system was destroying the country and ruining its future. But in a vast country there was no one to object to this madness! There was no one to say: stop! There were no state or public structures that would take care of the country and protect it from destructive actions. On the contrary, all parts of the state apparatus, all cells of society and almost all citizens expressed a passionate desire to participate in all this.

That's when it became clear that decades of a totalitarian regime had changed a person.

The ideology of the fight against cosmopolitanism was heavily mixed with anti-Semitism. Academician Yury Alexandrovich Polyakov recalled: “It seemed that the gloomy wolfhounds of dogmatism, the gushing mongrels of demagogy, the fast greyhounds of careerism, the big-haired bulldogs of the Black Hundreds, the well-trained cops of Judeophobia, were let off the chain.”

At the Lubyanka, the mood at the top was subtly felt.

On August 18, 1951, the Minister of State Security turned to the Central Committee: “I report that, according to the data available in the USSR Ministry of State Security, the rabbi, who is also the chairman of the board of the Moscow synagogue, Shlifer Solomon Mikhailovich, is conducting hostile nationalist work. Using his leading position in the synagogue, Schlifer, after the creation of the state of Israel, and then in connection with the arrival in Moscow of the head of the mission of this state, Meyerson

organized solemn divine services, accompanied by nationalist gatherings of Jews near the synagogue building.

Golda Meyerson (Meir), Israel's first ambassador to the Soviet Union (and then foreign minister and head of government), arrived in Moscow back in 1948. The USSR was the first de jure (that is, in full) to recognize the Jewish state, and at that time the Soviet leaders accepted Golda Meir more than kindly. But three years have passed, and the attitude towards Israel and the Jews has completely changed.

Long before the "case of the killers in white coats," the arrests of Jewish doctors began. On February 27, 1952, Ignatiev sent Stalin the protocol of the interrogation of the arrested assistant of the Department of Clinical Nutrition of the Central Institute for the Improvement of Doctors of the Academy of Medical Sciences: "Arrested Levin G.L., the son of the enemy of the people Levin L.G., showed that there is a nationalist group in the clinical nutrition clinic, headed by the director of the clinic, Professor Pevzner M.I. Members of the group used vicious methods of treatment that were detrimental to the health of patients and undermined Soviet health care. Among the persons included in this group, except for Levin G.L., Berlin L.B. was arrested. and Levin B.S."

This note formulates the accusation that Jewish doctors deliberately harm their patients. If Stalin is the head of state! - expressed a desire to read the protocol of the interrogation of the arrested doctor, which meant that the very idea, if not his own, was discussed with him, and he wanted to know how far the Chekists had advanced.

The business of the clinical nutrition clinic was started by Abakumov. On July 4, 1950, he sent a note to the Secretary of the Central Committee, Malenkov: "According to the data available in the USSR Ministry of State Security, as a result of the violation of the Bolshevik principle of recruitment in the clinical nutrition clinic of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, an atmosphere of nepotism and gangsterism was created. For this reason, out of 43 positions of leading and scientific workers of the clinic, 36 are occupied by persons of Jewish nationality. It is mostly Jews who end up in the clinic for treatment."

The note was the result of a denunciation. The medical official signaled to the authorities that "when filling out the medical history, the columns "nationality" and "party affiliation" were not filled in. And why? Not because both, generally speaking, have no meaning for therapy, but because the doctors attached their own ... And what does all this have to do with the Ministry of State Security?

But Malenkov knew how he should react to such a signal. I signed Abakumov's note to other secretaries of the Central Committee and to Vasily Emelyanovich Makarov, who had just been appointed head of the department of administrative bodies of the Central Committee: "Report proposals at a meeting of the secretariat of the Central Committee."

On August 2, Makarov fulfilled the order:

"There are serious shortcomings in the selection and placement of personnel in the work of the clinical nutrition clinic of the Scientific Research Institute of Nutrition of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences. Some positions of scientific employees were replaced on the proposal of prof. Pevzner by politically dubious individuals who have compromised themselves in the past, who have connections with relatives living abroad.

We would consider it necessary to instruct the USSR Ministry of Public Health to check the work of the therapeutic nutrition clinic and to strengthen it with personnel. Report the results to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks."

Six months later, Makarov will be appointed Deputy Minister of State Security. An employee of the Moscow party apparatus, he became a professional political worker during the war, received shoulder straps of a lieutenant general.

Relatives abroad - that's what interested the MGB.

Honored Scientist of the RSFSR Professor Manuil Isaakovich Pevzner, who once worked in German clinics, will turn into a British spy through the efforts of investigators - British agents were in great demand in such developments. But the professor

who is still called today one of the founders of Russian dietology and clinical gastroenterology, let down the Chekists: he died of a heart attack in May 1952 - before the arrest of the "killer doctors". And his clinic, once a leading medical institution, actually stopped working.

Colonel of the MGB Anatoly Rassypinsky was engaged in the affairs of the rabbi of the Moscow synagogue and nutritionists. He was one of the "killer investigators" who literally knocked out testimony.

In the institutes of the Academy of Sciences, creative unions, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, as in all other ideological institutions, a struggle was launched against the "Zionists" and "cosmopolitans", which turned out to be a profitable business. After anonymous letters and openly anti-Semitic speeches, places and positions were vacated. Quarries began to be made almost as quickly as in 1937, when superiors were shot, opening the way downline.

Someone felt gloating, confident that misfortune would bypass him: everything is in order with the fifth passport column. But the suffocating, poisonous atmosphere in which all this became possible hit not only the Jews.

Both Russians and Ukrainians were included in the number of "rootless cosmopolitans" who were humiliated and deprived of their jobs, and "killer doctors" who faced a worse fate. Not just for camouflage. The organizers of the campaign hurried on the sly to deal with the more successful and talented competitors, push them away and take their places. Under the Nazis, such an action was called the fight against "white Jewry", that is, against Jews not by blood, but by spirit.

Tikhon Nikolaevich Khrennikov, who for many years headed the Union of Composers of the USSR, told how he found vile letters in his mailbox: "Tisha-burdock, Tisha fell under the influence of the Jews, Tisha saves the Jews."

Writer Ivan Fotievich Stadnyuk served in those years in the press department of the political department of the ground forces. In his memoir Confessions of a Stalinist, he writes how his comrades in the political administration suspected him of non-Aryan origin: In my very appearance (a hooked nose, freckled face, reddish curly hair), others also saw something Semitic ... And when the so-called "struggle against cosmopolitanism" began in the country, and I did not stop communicating with their front-line friends, someone drew the appropriate conclusions.

Stadnyuk learned about this from a panicked letter from his brother. He wrote: "What did you do there in that Moscow? .. Killed someone, stabbed someone to death? Aren't you in prison?.. People won't let me pass!" A colonel came to Stadnyuk's native village from Moscow and, having called on the local head of state security, called relatives, neighbors, and asked who Stadnyuk was by nationality.

Ivan Fotievich rushed to the head of the political department of the ground forces, General Lieutenant Sergei Fedorovich Galadzhhev, threw a letter on his desk with the words:

- What does all of this mean? This is fascism! When at the front I was ordered to raise fighters for the attack, no one was interested in who I was by nationality!

Sergei Galadzhhev did not read Ukrainian. But in his office was a major general. He said:

- I know Ukrainian. Let's translate into Russian.

The general began to read, and his face turned pale. Stadnyuk looked at the unfamiliar general. And suddenly I realized: unlike him, the general is really a Jew, and the letter he read is much more painful for him!

The general asked the head of the political department:

- Me, then, will be expelled from the army for the same reasons?

The phone rang. Galadzhhev picked up the phone:

- Yes, I have a general ... No! I am categorically against his dismissal to the reserve!

The head of the political department told Stadnyuk:

- Arrange an extraordinary vacation for ten days and in an officer's uniform, with

orders, appear in your native village. Let people see that nothing happened to you.

- And what to answer their questions?

- Say, misunderstanding, stupidity. Don't tell the truth: ashamed of the army...

Galadzhev looked sympathetically at the general:

- And I ask you not to be offended ... Something incomprehensible and unacceptable. Let's be of good courage... Go back to your unit and serve.

It is somehow forgotten that in reality the main victims of the Great Terror were the peasantry and the church. It is generally accepted that Stalin abandoned the Bolshevik attitude towards the Orthodox Church and began to support it. It is a myth. He needed the support of the church in years of the Great Patriotic War, when allied relations with England and America ruled out the possibility of repressions against the church. And after the war, he again began to crush her.

On August 10, 1948, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Voroshilov allowed the opening of twenty-eight Orthodox churches. Stalin ordered everything to be canceled, and Voroshilov was punished. On October 28, the Politburo issued a resolution:

"1. Specify item. Voroshilov that he did wrong by signing the orders of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on the opening of churches and prayer buildings in a number of settlements.

2. Cancel the orders of the Council of Ministers of the USSR signed by Comrade Voroshilov.

Churches that had just opened were closed. And until the death of Stalin, not a single new Orthodox church was opened. In 1949, the previously opened churches began to close. Before the death of the leader, more than a thousand temples were transferred to clubs and warehouses.

In the fight against the "cosmopolitans" and other enemies, a close-knit cohort of professional whistleblowers was forged, as a rule, mediocrity, who made a career by destroying their colleagues. All over the country they took up an exciting business, and there was no longer any need to spur them on from the center.

The regime gave a lot to those who broke through to the top. The playwright Vsevolod Vishnevsky, who became famous after the revolution with the play *Optimistic Tragedy*, wrote in his diary with surprise: "Sergei Mikhalkov sets out his life credo to me: "You need to know what will please you "above" ... Well, hello, young tribe."

Eliminating the bright, gifted, and therefore independent, Stalin opened the way for mediocrity, for the threes. Having fallen into favor with Stalin, they received a particle of his unlimited power. And first of all eliminated competitors. Party nomenclature - a greedy crowd, ready to strangle anyone who interferes with breaking through to the throne. A close-knit cohort that made a career by destroying talented colleagues.

"They are united not by an organization, and not by a common ideology, and not by a common love, and not by envy, but by something stronger and deeper - mediocrity," wrote Emmanuil Kazakevich, a front-line intelligence officer and author of the wonderful story "The Star" (recently filmed). -

Why be surprised at their mutual responsibility, their solidarity, their organization, their perseverance?

Incompetence is a great chain, a great secret order, a Freemasonic sign that they instantly recognize on each other and which brings them together like the Old Believer two-fingered schismatics.

And here is the disastrous result for the country. Academician Pyotr Kapitsa wrote: "Fundamentally new directions in world technology, which are based on new discoveries in physics, all developed abroad, and we adopted them after they received undeniable recognition. I will list the main ones: short-wave technology (including radar), television, all types of jet engines in aviation, gas turbine, atomic energy, isotope separation, accelerators ... But the most offensive thing is that the main ideas of these fundamentally new directions in the development of technology were often born us before, but did not develop, because they did not find recognition and favorable conditions for themselves.

On January 28, 1949, Pravda published a large article "On an anti-patriotic group of theater critics." The day before, the then editor-in-chief of Pravda, Pyotr Nikolaevich Pospelov, visited the Central Committee. He wrote down the instructions of the leader: "For

diversity, give three formulations: in the first case, where the word "cosmopolitanism" is used, it is uracosmopolitanism; in the second - rabid cosmopolitanism; in third - rootless cosmopolitanism.

It is probably even difficult for a young reader to understand why an article devoted to something like would be a narrow shop issue, led to dire consequences that crippled society.

They took on theater critics who allowed themselves to subject the feeble plays of opportunistic playwrights to exacting analysis. The fulfillment of professional duty was transferred to the political plane. Where there was an analysis of the play, they saw malicious intent. The plays were bad, the audience did not go to them, but the authors were well-known people, with positions, with connections. They found a way to get even with the critics. The critics were accused not only of slandering Soviet playwrights, but also of vicious opponents of Russian culture.

On February 18, 1948, a three-day meeting of playwrights and theater critics. From the podium sounded:

– These are not just cosmopolitans, not just anti-patriots, but this is anti-Soviet, anti-patriotic activity, this is counter-revolutionary activity. A tight-knit organized group united by a criminal purpose and harmful activity...

The Plenum of the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers, which exposed the "rootless cosmopolitans", was held at the Central House of Writers. The report was delivered by Alexander Fadeev, General Secretary of the Writers' Union. At the height of his speech, the lights went out in the oak hall of the Central House of Writers. Candles were brought in, and Fadeev continued his gloomy speech by candlelight. There was something diabolical about it. Not in the fact that the light went out, it happens, but in what and how Fadeev said.

The people he called enemies were well known to him. Until recently, he supported them as talented art critics and theater connoisseurs. Befriended some. And he betrayed everyone! Such was the price he paid for his high chair. Subsequently, he repented that he had taken part in this shameful deed. After drinking, he told how he was summoned to the Central Committee and forced to deliver this report. I asked him to understand

- What could I answer Joseph Vissarionovich? What could I?

But he not only carried out orders from above, but also showed initiative. He destroyed what he considered politically harmful, although at the same time he perfectly understood who was talented and who was mediocre. Fadeev was not like other literary officials, for whom the Writers' Union was just a feeding trough. Unlike them, he understood and loved literature. Gathered writers and read them what they wrote, wept over their own pages. Therefore, in the end, he could not stand it and shot himself.

More dexterous characters, recalled Professor Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman, kept aloof, realizing that "the ideological Sabbath will not last long and those who are now soaring up other people's bones so quickly will fall down just as quickly."

In the struggle against the "rootless cosmopolitans", Anatoly Alekseevich Surov, the hope of Russian dramaturgy, became famous. He had personal reasons for this. Critics have allowed themselves to speak without respect of his work. And Surov enjoyed high patronage. His play "Green Street" was shown on the best stage in the country -

Moscow Art Theatre. The premiere took place on December 28, 1949. The play was awarded the Stalin Prize of the second degree.

Surov quickly wrote a new one - "The Possessed Haberdasher", it was staged by the Central Theater of Transport and printed by the magazine "October". The Central Committee noted: "The first attempt to create a political pamphlet on an anti-American theme. The author set out to expose the adventurist policy of the ruling circles of America by means of a satirical comedy.

The moment of glory was short-lived. It turned out that Anatoly Surov himself wrote only statements and requests. All the plays were written for him by hard-pressed playwrights and critics! The very ones he denounced in servility. expelled from work,

"cosmopolitans" deprived of the opportunity to publish, who were looking for any opportunity to earn something to feed their families ... Anonymous authors were called "literary blacks" - at that time a rare day passed without a newspaper article about the disenfranchised position of the black population in the United States.

For scandalous plagiarism - an unprecedented case! - Surov, secretary of the party organization of Moscow playwrights, was deprived of the right to authorship. While drunk, Surov got into a fight with Mikhail Semyonovich Bubennov, the author of the equally untalented book *White Birch*, which was also raised by party criticism. Surov scoffed at his comrade in the writer's shop: it's a shame to live from one novel. Offended, Bubennov reminded Surov that others were writing plays for him. Surov stuck a tambourine fork into the sirloin. Bubennov, standing at the open window, desperately called for help.

The scandal with the fight between two writers was hushed up. But Anatoly Surov, completely drunk, made a scandal on election day to his misfortune. He came to the polling station ten minutes before voting, threw the ballot paper on the floor and trampled on it for a long time. It was already an unforgivable offense. Surov was expelled from the Writers' Union and from the party. Then they quietly forgave me - they returned the writer's book and party card.

The system has corrupted the people.

A person sits at a party meeting, listens to the radio, reads newspapers - and what does he see? Hypocrisy and outright lies. And what does he do? He's starting to adjust. This is how the Soviet man is formed ... He constantly wore a mask. Sometimes the mask grew to the face. And under the mask were hiding cynicism, naked calculation and indifference. All this helped to survive - in the camp, on the collective farm, in the office.

The question often arises, how can smart and educated people serve the authorities so devotedly, serve frankly illiterate and narrow-minded leaders? Humiliations of this kind have always been generously compensated by material goods and privileges. And is it not the fear of losing these privileges that drives officials at all levels?

The privileges of the Soviet era cannot be compared with the position of the current leadership and its servants, who live in grand style. So in those days, the rest of the citizens of the socialist state had nothing! And no way to buy what they need! Losing the right to use the "canteen of medical nutrition", which for many decades supplied the Soviet nomenclature with good quality products (those who did not belong to the nomenclature, in principle, did not see such products), as well as the opportunity to be treated in the Kremlin's Medical and Sanitary Department, was a real grief.

for the officer and his family...

"Many literary scholars, critics, translators fell into the category of cosmopolitans, and we could not protect them," recalled Alexander Puzikov, editor-in-chief of the *Khudozhestvennaya Literatura* publishing house. - We understood the injustice of the instructions coming from above, but we were silent - and therefore became accomplices in this shameful persecution.

The end of the forties - the beginning of the fifties Time for spy mania, denunciations, surveillance! We almost physically felt that someone was listening to us, looking closely, observing. No one felt protected from troubles, from terrible sudden accusations, arrests, exiles. People didn't just disappear - they disappeared with a stigma, they found themselves in a worse situation than lepers. Fear enveloped everyone, from top to bottom. Fear was democratic. He pursued everyone - both those who were below and those who were above, from switchman to drug commissar. We got used to fear, tried to assure ourselves that it was some kind of guilt dragging behind others, but we are clean, you won't find fault with us.

Since the "anti-patriotic group of critics" was selected almost exclusively from Jews, the campaign acquired a political connotation. It was a signal to search for internal enemies. From this ideological section, the road led to the new bloody war outlined by Stalin.

campaigns.

The development of another line - the Jewish one - began.

On June 25, 1949, the Politburo decided on the political mistakes of the first

Secretary of the Jewish Autonomous Region of the Khabarovsk Territory Alexander Naumovich Bakhmutsky and Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee Mikhail Evelevich Levitin. What were they accused of?

"They were conciliatory towards the manifestations of bourgeois nationalism, as a result of which a group of nationalists operated in the ideological institutions of the region for a long time, propagandizing Zionist-nationalist views in the region, contributed to the spread of pro-American and bourgeois-nationalist sentiments among a certain part of the population of the region, did not give a correct political assessment to numerous private relations of the citizens of the Jewish Autonomous Region with America as a channel for the penetration of enemy propaganda.

Alexander Bakhmutsky, a former locksmith at the Hammer and Sickle factory, was sentenced to death. The death penalty was commuted to 25 years in prison. Similar harsh sentences were handed down to other leaders of the Jewish Autonomous Region.

On November 28, 1948, Stalin signed the secret decision of the Bureau of the Council of Ministers - "The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee should be immediately dissolved, the press organs of this committee should be closed, and the affairs of the committee taken away." The next day, employees of the Ministry of State Security searched the committee's premises, took away all the documentation, the building

sealed up.

The trial in the case of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, created in the forty-first year to fight Nazism, was supposed to show that all Jews are American spies and work for overseas masters. But the process had to be closed, because the defendants did not recognize themselves as spies: actor Veniamin Zuskin, academician Lina Stern, writers Perets Markish, Lev Kvitko, Semyon Galkin, David Gofshtein, head physician of the Botkinskaya hospital Boris Shimeliovich, former member of the N, K VKP(b) and Deputy Foreign Minister Solomon Lozovsky ...

The arrested were beaten. Some died right in prison. The investigation needed something serious - the preparation of an assassination attempt on Stalin, espionage, sabotage, and these people, even when they were beaten, could not come up with anything like that. They played in the theater, wrote poetry, treated the sick.

Selected personnel of the Ministry of State Security were engaged in them. Colonel Komarov, later arrested, recalled his merits: "I especially hated and was merciless with Jewish nationalists, in whom I saw the most dangerous and vicious enemies. Having learned about the atrocities committed by the Jewish nationalists, I was filled with even greater malice towards them and I earnestly ask you to give me the opportunity, with all my hatred for my enemies, to avenge them for their atrocities, for the harm that they caused to the state.

The investigators were sure of the original guilt of the Jews, of their natural inclination to commit crimes, of their readiness to betray their homeland. Stalin explained this to them. They acted on his personal instructions. It was an ethnic lawsuit. They were judged not for the crime, but for the origin.

The well-known actors, writers, doctors sitting on the dock did not participate in the preparation of terrorist acts against Comrade Stalin, did not engage in espionage, and did not even conduct anti-Soviet propaganda. The Chairman of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, Lieutenant-General of Justice Alexander Alexandrovich Cheptsov, accused the defendants of wanting to write in their native language, publish books in Yiddish, have their own theater and stage Jewish plays in it, and keep schools teaching in Hebrew.

General Cheptsov reproached one of the defendants:

– Why would a communist, writer, Marxist, advanced Jewish intellectual need to contact priests, rabbis, obscurantists, advise them about preaching, about matzoh, about prayer books, about kosher meat?

An illiterate investigator, seeing that the writer Abram Kogan corrects errors in the text of his own interrogation, beat him up: he knows, scoundrel, Russian, but writes in Hebrew!

Concern for national culture was recognized as harmful and unpatriotic.

Lieutenant General of Justice Cheptsov quickly and without hesitation handed down death sentences in cases prepared by investigators from the Ministry of State Security. But when, by decision of the Central Committee, a two-month trial was arranged for the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, detailed interrogations of the accused showed that there was no evidence at all of the guilt of the defendants.

Despite the torture and bullying, far from young and not very healthy people showed an example of fortitude and courage. General Cheptsov even imbued with respect for the defendants, "questioned the completeness and objectivity of the investigation." Started a conversation with Minister Ignatiev. He replied that Ryumin was in charge of the case, and everyone believes him.

Risking his party card and career, Cheptsov asked the Central Committee for permission to return the case for additional investigation. Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov, to whom the general turned, did not give to do this:

"You want to bring us to our knees before these criminals. The verdict in the case was approved by the people, the Politburo dealt with the case three times. Carry out the decision of the Politburo.

The trial of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee began on May 8, 1952. And a month before, on April 3, Minister of State Security Ignatiev, in a memorandum to Stalin, suggested that all those accused in the case of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee be shot. The leader condescended only to Academician Line Stern, a world-famous biologist who came from Switzerland to build socialism. She was sent to a forced labor camp. The rest were shot...

The investigators also demanded testimonies from the arrested against other prominent Jews.

Deputy Minister of State Security Colonel Ryumin, interrogating the arrested Lieutenant Colonel of State Security Igor Borisovich Maklyarsky, in his own way explained to a recent colleague: the head of Jewish nationalists in Moscow and the main Israeli spy is Polina Semyonovna Zhemchuzhina, wife of Molotov, herself a recent people's commissar, a candidate member of the Central Committee and a deputy of the Supreme Council THE USSR. Ryumin also needed evidence against Lazar Moiseevich Kaganovich. He would like to construct a conspiracy led by a member of the Politburo.

Why did the hunt for Jews begin? A new large-scale internal enemy was needed. Historians note: on the eve of mass terror, they invariably form a large group of enemies - then there is no need to prove the guilt of everyone. For example, kulaks, wreckers, Trotskyists ... Now - the Jews. This immediately raised the conspiracy to the world level. After all, behind the Jews, the propagandists explained, were Israel and the United States.

Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich Malyshev, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers for Mechanical Engineering, wrote down the words of the leader, spoken by him in the narrowest circle - at a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee on December 1, 1952:

- Any Jew is a nationalist, this is an agent of American intelligence.

Two weeks later, on December 15, Stalin, in the presence of members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, again received the heads of state security. He formulated another postulate of politics and propaganda:

Our main enemy is America.

Everything was going to bring serious accusations against the United States. Not only in interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, but also in the preparation of terrorist acts against Stalin and other leaders of the country. In particular, the accusation was made that from the windows of the American embassy on Manezhnaya Square they were going to fire at the Kremlin when Stalin and other leaders of the country gathered there. They closed GUM because they feared that a sniper from the country's main store might shoot at the windows of the Kremlin offices.

On April 10, 1951, Abakumov addressed Stalin:

"Perhaps you will find it expedient to remove Oslikovsky from his post.

positions and send him to one of the internal military districts, where he will be placed under KGB surveillance.

We are concerned about the fact that, being the head of the Higher Cavalry Officer School, Oslikovsky is involved in preparing a horse for the host of the parade on Red Square. Since a number of Jewish nationalists who were closely associated with Oslikovsky and had anti-Soviet conversations with him were arrested, no matter how he did some dirty trick.

During the war, Lieutenant General Nikolai Sergeevich Oslikovsky was appointed commander of the 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps. On this occasion, the General was received by the Supreme Commander. A few minutes next to the leader were remembered by him for the rest of his life. Oslikovsky left notes that were carefully kept in the family:

"Having arrived at the indicated time to Marshal Budyonny, I learned from him that Comrade Stalin personally called me. Needless to say about the excitement and joy that seized me. In the office of Marshal Budyonny, we were waiting for a call from the Kremlin. At about two o'clock in the morning, Comrade Poskrebyshev called.

Arriving at the Kremlin and going into the working rooms of Comrade Stalin, we were invited to his office. I saw Comrade Stalin standing in his usual posture in the middle of the office. Introduced to him. He greeted me, asked how I felt after being wounded, and offered to sit down. Comrade Stalin was busy talking on the HF for several minutes, and then asked if I could handle this big position.

I replied that I would try to justify the trust of the Motherland and fulfill his orders, Comrade Stalin. I was handed papers, and Stalin ordered the general on duty to send me by plane, said goodbye and wished me good luck. This meeting served as a guiding star for me in the most difficult days of the war and will serve as a guiding light for the rest of my life."

And a man in love with the leader was suspected of intending to commit a terrorist act against Stalin? With the help of a horse?.. But in that atmosphere, Abakumov's message did not seem insane.

Harrison Salisbury arrived in Moscow in March 1949 as a correspondent for The New York Times: "In my usual foolish manner, I began to send letters or call everyone I met in Moscow during the war years. I didn't call anyone and didn't get a response from anyone. And when I ran into acquaintances on the street, they pretended not to notice me. Contact with an American "spy" could be fatal."

Americans - embassy employees and their wives - were not recommended to go it alone walk the streets of Moscow. Yes, no one walked, what kind of joy is it to wander under supervision?

"The spies were miserable-looking young people of twenty-thirty years of age, - recalled Salisbury. - As a result of the same training, they all looked alike. They wore identical raincoats, velor hats and heavy boots. On one of the May Day days, I was standing on Red Square and noticed thirty or forty spies, all in new burgundy or green velor hats, in new yellow boots with thick soles and new gray raincoats - no doubt a gift from the ministry for the May holidays.

The well-known American diplomat and expert on Russia, George Kennan, was appointed ambassador to the USSR on December 27, 1951. He arrived in Moscow on May 5, 1952. I was struck by the open hostility to the United States. He did not get to Stalin. Unlike during the war, the leader no longer received American ambassadors. Even those who were previously allowed to communicate with diplomats have disappeared. George Kennan was especially offended that the Soviet authorities were so dismissive of a man in love with Russia.

The ambassador wrote to Washington to President Harry Truman: "We are so cut off, constrained by bans, and so ignored by the Soviet government, that it looks as if diplomatic relations have been cut off altogether."

In the early morning of September 19, 1952, George Kennan flew from Moscow to London on

meeting of American diplomats. The plane made an intermediate landing in West Berlin. Three correspondents were waiting for him at Tempelhof Airport. One of them asked the American ambassador how he was living in Moscow.

"When the war started, I was working at the American embassy in Berlin and we were interned," Kennan replied. - So in Moscow they treat us in much the same way as the Nazis treated interned diplomats. The only difference is that in Moscow we can leave our houses and walk the streets under guard.

On September 26, 1952, Pravda accused the American ambassador of malicious lies and slander. The Foreign Ministry declared him an undesirable person - persona non grata. Kennan was unable to return to the Soviet Union. American diplomats were left without an ambassador.

Garrison Salisbury tried to guess the intentions of the Soviet authorities: "Apparently, they are going to conduct trials related to American spies (that is, correspondents), which fall under the five journalists still remaining in Moscow. Since I am also a potential meat for this roast, I really hope that the Kremlin cooks are up to something else. But strange things are happening in this strange state."

Intuition did not change Salisbury. No wonder he remembered November 1952 as "a gloomy, depressing time, a period of intense silence through which unfamiliar sounds made their way, foreshadowing disturbing events."

By the end of the year, Stalin had pulled together three main knots: traitors in the Ministry of State Security, doctors killing party leaders, and the United States preparing a new world war.

The master of the country created a conspiracy, the reality of which everyone had to believe.

Now, when all the lines came together, the leader decided, the time had come to open the eyes of the Soviet people to what vile and insidious enemies were operating at home and what a powerful enemy abroad was helping them.

Line nine killer doctors

On January 13, 1953, Pravda published a TASS report "The Arrest of a Group of Wrecker Doctors" and on the front page an editorial "Sneaky spies and murderers disguised as medical professors." The Soviet people learned that the state security organs "discovered a terrorist group of doctors, whose goal was to shorten the life of active workers of the USSR through sabotage treatment."

The message listed the arrested doctors - six Jewish surnames, three Russians.

"Most of the members of the terrorist group," the TASS report said, "were associated with the international Jewish bourgeois-nationalist organization Joint, created by American intelligence ...

Arrested Vovsi M.S. stated to the investigation that he received a directive "on the extermination of the leading cadres of the USSR" from the United States from the organization "Joint" through the doctor Shimeliovich and the Jewish bourgeois nationalist Mikhoels. Other members terrorist group (V.N. Vinogradov, M.B. Kogan, P.I. Egorov) turned out to be long-standing agents of British intelligence."

The draft TASS statement on the case of the killer doctors was discussed in the Central Committee of the CPSU on January 9, 1953. The editor-in-chief of Pravda, Dmitry Shepilov, presented Stalin with the text of an editorial for his newspaper, which was supposed to explain everything that was happening in a language understandable to the people. The leader himself straightened it out.

The TASS statement, addressed to the whole world, was sustained in a relatively calm tone. But Pravda did not hesitate to write about "cannibal slave owners from the USA and England." The main thing that the Soviet people had to realize fit in a short

formula: arrested doctors - agents of the United States and England, who are preparing a war.

An all-Union campaign to identify the killers in white coats began. Local security agencies and the party apparatus were instructed to report to the capital on the reaction of the population and take the initiative themselves. For example, in Kuzbass, the state security department informed the regional party committee that the population of the region demanded "to apply capital punishment to poisoning doctors." The first secretary of the Kemerovo regional committee, Mikhail Ilyich Gusev, reported to the Central Committee: "The hearts of the working people of Stalin's Kuzbass are full of ardent anger. They demand capital punishment for the murderers hiding under white coats."

The owner of the region expressed a wish to the head of the state security department, Colonel Nikolai Fedorovich Ilyasov: "Immediately open a criminal group among doctors in the city of Stalinsk." Stalinsk is now Novokuznetsk.

The Chekists did not suspect such a group, but they followed the instructions. On January 16, Colonel Ilyasov sent one lieutenant colonel and two majors of state security from the regional administration to help the city department (see the collection "Serving the Fatherland. Memoirs, Articles, Documents", Volume II, Kemerovo, 2005). Together, they opened in Stalinsk a branch of the "Zionist organization" Joint ", associated with the American special services." They arrested three doctors from the Institute for the Improvement of Doctors - all with Jewish surnames.

The country was engulfed in real hysteria. People refused to be treated, take medicines. Every doctor was under suspicion.

Academician Boris Vasilyevich Petrovsky, one of the largest Soviet surgeons and future Minister of Health, recalled that on the day when the message about the killer doctors appeared, he gathered fellow surgeons and they decided to cancel all operations scheduled for that day. In the wards, the patients heatedly discussed the TASS report. Petrovsky told the patients that there were no pests in his team, nevertheless, given what was happening, it was decided to cancel the operations. The patients answered firmly:

We believe in you and ask you not to cancel the operation.

In the Soviet representation in Paris, the embassy doctor was put under house arrest, although her husband was a member of the state security. And then, as luck would have it, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Andreevich Gromyko, who was passing through Paris, fell ill. I had to call the doctor anyway. She examined the patient - the flu. She handed Gromyko the medicine. The future minister sharply removed her hand:

I won't take your medicine!

Children's writer Korney Ivanovich Chukovsky talked with the wife of the classic of Soviet literature Leonid Leonov, Tatyana Mikhailovna. She complained that after the report of "doctor pests" it was impossible to turn to doctors:

- You understand when doctors are declared poisoners ... There is no trust in pharmacies either; especially to the Kremlin pharmacy: what if all medicines are poisoned?!

Chukovsky stunnedly wrote in his diary: "It turns out that there were even people in the literary environment who believed that doctors were poisoners!!!"

The Chekists promised to please the leadership with new labor successes.

On January 16, 1953, the secretary of the party committee No. 1 of the MGB of the USSR, Sergei Timofeevich Astavin (during the war, the first secretary of the Ivanovo and Vladimir regional committees of the Komsomol, and in the future ambassador to Iceland and Cyprus) turned to the secretary of the Central Committee Malenkov:

"In connection with the publication in the Pravda newspaper of materials on exposing spies and murderers under the guise of professors-doctors, the communists and employees of the operational departments and departments of the USSR Ministry of State Security note absolutely correct severe criticism of the state security agencies, which did not reveal the terrorist organization among doctors in time. At the same time, many comrades report shortcomings in their work and facts of idleness and carelessness.

In the 5th Department and Inspection of the Ministry, individual communists spoke of

that the workers of the former Main Directorate of Security TT. Maslennikov, Guzanov, Divakov are largely to blame for the fact that agents of the American and British intelligence services operated with impunity for a long time in the Medical and Sanitary Department of the Kremlin, but so far they have not been held accountable for their political carelessness

In the party organizations of the Main Directorate of Guards on Railway and Water Transport, the Intelligence Directorate, the opinion was expressed that there were still quite a few persons of Jewish nationality working in the MGB bodies, who had serious compromising materials, but they were transferred from place to place, and the question of their dismissal from the authorities is not resolved.

On January 14, 1953, the US State Department received a cipher telegram from Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, Jake Beam, who wrote: "The Doctors' Plot" is a cold-blooded falsification with certain political goals.

Of course, some information about what was happening in the Soviet Union leaked behind the Iron Curtain. Something was told by foreign correspondents who worked in the USSR, something by recent officials or intelligence officers who had fled the country. But many Americans and Europeans simply refused to believe it was possible.

In Washington, at a meeting of the US Congressional Commission on Un-American Activities, the famous writer Ayn Rand described life in the Soviet Union under Stalin.

- So, in Russia now no one smiles? one of them asked her incredulously. congressmen. You have painted a very bleak picture.

"People in a free country," Rand replied, "can't imagine what it's like to live under a totalitarian dictatorship. I can tell you this in detail. But it's hard for you to imagine this, because you are a free person.

The story of the arrested doctors was a shock and caused mass indignation. Physicians have not been charged with such charges since the Middle Ages. Prominent Americans called on newly inaugurated President Dwight Eisenhower to speak out against state anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, demanded decisiveness:

- During Hitler's domination, the civilized world, unable to believe that mass extermination could become a reality, did little to stop it. With this terrible experience in mind, we have no reason to delay.

Moscow's answer was not long in coming. On February 17, 1953, Stalin invited the little-known Indian politician Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu for a talk. He retold Stalin's words to the New York Times correspondent in Moscow, Harrison Salisbury. According to him, the leader warned the West:

"If war breaks out, England will be swept away. In the event of a war, it will be bad for both Russia and the United States. But for England it will be fatal. The British will not be able to support the United States in the war. As is France. They will have to break with the US.

It was an unequivocal threat.

"Three times in February, Stalin came out of his seclusion to meet with foreigners: the Argentine ambassador Bravo, the Indian ambassador Menon, and the leader of the peace movement in India, Dr. Kitchlu," Salisbury wrote. Everyone was talking about Stalin's "perfect health", his lively mind, his ability to quickly grasp the essence of phenomena. Later, Menon told me that during the conversation, Stalin absently drew something in a notebook with a red pencil. They were images of wolves, many, many wolves. Stalin spoke about wolves. He said that the Russian peasants knew how to deal with wolves - they destroyed them.

February seems to be the longest month. Hopeless, dark days with a cold wind, a gray sky, snow falling day after day, when women in gray padded jackets and gray scarves clean the streets with witches' brooms, and the corridors of the Metropol become gloomier, and ghosts appear in their corners. Life stops, hope disappears. I

really felt something apocalyptic in the Moscow atmosphere. There was a metallic taste of fear in my mouth.

In the last month of Stalin, it seemed that the "case of doctors" and all other cases slowed down. In fact, the interrogations of the arrested continued until the death of the leader. Doctors were accused of wrecking the treatment of Stalin's children - Vasily and Svetlana.

The investigator interrogated Academician Vladimir Vinogradov:

- You were involved in the treatment of Vasily Iosifovich and inflicted with your criminal actions harm his health. Will you deny it?

- I have been involved in the treatment of Vasily Iosifovich since the thirties. However, I did not harm his health. In the post-war years, Vasily Iosifovich had a mental illness. Despite the fact that he was repeatedly treated at the Barvikha sanatorium, his health nevertheless deteriorated, and recently the disease has worsened, a severe mental disorder has been observed.

- But the investigation knows that it was you who aggravated Vasily Iosifovich's illness. Talk about what really happened...

The investigators had no doubt that they would get the necessary evidence. Head of internal Colonel Alexander Nikolaevich Mironov of the MGB prison explained how they acted:

- The heads of the investigative departments of the departments usually called me about the use of handcuffs and beatings in relation to certain detainees. In each case, I checked these instructions, called the relevant deputy ministers. After making sure that the order came from the Deputy Minister, I gave orders to put on handcuffs or carry out a beating. During the application of physical force to the arrested, I was present all the time. They beat me with rubber sticks.

The leader was not satisfied with what he had achieved. He was looking for all new threads and weaved everything new patterns. Such was his handiwork.

The investigative unit of the MGB for particularly important cases worked at full capacity. The operatives from the 11th department of the 5th directorate of the MGB helped, who carried out KGB work among medical workers. The investigators hurried with the doctors: rather, it was necessary to get information about what kind of intelligence they worked for, and prepare a big trial. To the arrested professor Yakov Lvovich Rappoport, the investigator said with professional resentment in his voice:

- Well, why are you giving such evidence? With them, you can not go to an open process!

In January 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee decided to build new camps for 150-200 thousand prisoners. Who were they for? The decision of the presidium stated: for "particularly dangerous foreign criminals." There were not so many foreigners in the country!

The investigative machine was led by Deputy Minister of State Security Mikhail Dmitrievich Ryumin, who liked the leader. But for the insignificant Ryumin, participation in a great intrigue brought only a moment of happiness.

Stalin brought the illiterate Ryumin closer, because he was his creation - not thinking, not doubting. Of those who not only carry out any orders of the leader, but also independently identify and destroy enemies. But he was a mediocre worker, so Ryumin's career was short-lived.

He joyfully reported to Stalin that professor-therapist Vladimir Kharitonovich Vasilenko concealed his participation in the anti-Party opposition, but he, Ryumin, exposed the scoundrel. Stalin immediately saw that this fool would only spoil the whole thing. I wrote to Ryumin: we are not interested in Vasilenko's political biography. What does it matter? We need to know what foreign intelligence he works for, who gives him instructions. For the sake of this, everything was started!

On November 13, 1952, Ryumin sent Stalin a lengthy note about his work. The leader was angry: his nominee did not justify his trust. Did not cope. On the same day, he signed a decree of the Council of Ministers:

"The government several times pointed out both to the Minister of State Security, and especially to the beginning of the investigative unit for especially important cases of the USSR Ministry of State Security, that when investigating such important anti-Soviet cases related to foreign intelligence, as the case of the enemy work of Abakumov and the case of the terrorist activities of doctors from Lechsanupr, one cannot confine oneself to clarifying particulars and the formal legal side of the case, but get to the roots of the case, to the source of crimes.

However, despite these instructions from the Government, the investigative unit for especially important cases, due to the vicious attitude of its head, comrade. Ryumina proved unable to comply with these instructions of the Government, and both cases mentioned above still remain unsolved to the end."

Ryumin was expelled from the MGB. He was transferred to the Ministry of State Control as a senior controller.

All these crazy games were played against the backdrop of the desperate state of the country. On November 1, 1952, the first secretary of the Yaroslavl regional committee, Vladimir Vasilievich Lukyanov, addressed the secretary of the Central Committee and deputy head of government, Malenkov:

"A particularly difficult situation has developed in the fourth quarter of this year with meat, sausages, animal oil, sugar, herring, cheese, cereals and pasta. Trade in these goods takes place with large interruptions due to the accumulation of queues. For most goods, funds are declining quarter by quarter."

In 1952, in the Soviet Union, milk and dairy products were consumed half as much as in the United States, meat, fish, sugar - three times, fruits - five times. But the consumption of bread and potatoes was four times higher.

And the leader hurried the Chekists. On January 27, 1953, Minister of State Security Ignatiev sent a special message to the leader: "I report to you, Comrade Stalin, that after an illness I started work ... We are concentrating all our attention and efforts on putting things in order on the basis of honest implementation of the decisions of the Central Committee and your instructions in a short time in the work of the bodies of the MGB, to put an end to complacency, idleness, cowardice and the habits that have taken root among many workers to live in the past glory.

The testimony of Ivan Ivanovich Varfolomeev, a white émigré brought from China, was the very element that was so lacking in the overall picture of this incredible conspiracy - he connected the internal enemy with the external one. He would have been put in the dock at the same time as the killer doctors. And he would say that the United States was going to start a war against the Soviet Union with the destruction of Stalin himself.

But even a superficial check showed that the public process does not work. Illiterate investigators of the MGB, who were never required to do professional work, badly scribbled the Varfolomeev case.

It turned out that the American oligarch Lamota Dupont, who allegedly financed the "internal strike plan", had long died. American General John O'Daniel, who, according to investigators, undertook to kill the leader with his own hands, left Moscow, so he could not participate in the terrorist attack.

The plan, lovingly hatched in the MGB, collapsed. Varfolomeev was offered to simply be shot. But Stalin was in no hurry to execute him. The thrifty leader told the Minister of State Security Ignatiev: let Varfolomeev sit, it will still come in handy.

But there was not enough material for a public process, or deportations, or in general any actions important for the processing of public opinion! That is why the leader was angry with his henchmen in those months. Stalin felt that his historical time was running out. And when there was literally a step to implement such a large-scale plan, the mortal body let the leader down. He has gone to another world.

Since the leader did not share his plans with anyone, only the "doctors' case" remained in history. And everything else - the grandiose conspiracy he invented to prepare the country for a new war - seemed to have disappeared. Except for the deep-rooted notions that America is the main enemy.

The "internal strike plan", designed by magicians from the MGB investigative unit for especially important cases, was wasted. Not needed. Ivan Varfolomeev, who was supposed to reveal this plan to the world, was sent to the next world on September 10, 1953. Half a century later, in 2002, he was rehabilitated.

But the former Deputy Minister of State Security Ryumin and other investigators after Stalin's death were accused of having planned to arrange an open trial of Varfolomeev, and this "would have caused damage to the Soviet Union." Colonel Ryumin was arrested immediately after Stalin's death, a year later he was shot, and the epaulets were torn off from others.

In other words, the new leaders of the country understood that the publication of an insane "plan of internal strike" would expose the Soviet government to ridicule. But, perhaps, only abroad. Our own citizens would have believed. They believed in everything else.

Part two

Leader's departure

Loneliness at the hour of death

The leader strongly surrendered at the end of 1952.

Alexander Nikolaevich Shelepin, the new Komsomol leader - after the XIX congress made the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, - as expected, introduced to Stalin.

He was thoroughly prepared for the meeting with the leader, the chairman of the foreign policy commission of the Central Committee, Vagan Grigorievich Grigoryan instructed the Komsomol secretary:

- It is necessary to report very briefly - five - seven minutes. talk mainly about international youth movement.

Shelepin was also taken to Malenkov, who admonished him this way:

"Keep in mind, he can hardly hear anything, so you need to speak loudly, even shout. Secondly, when you come to his office, do not hold anything in your hands: no folders, no papers.

Shelepin opened the door, went in and said very loudly:

Hello Comrade Stalin!

The leader leaned over the table, was silent. Shelepin came close and shouted:

Hello Comrade Stalin!

He raised his eyes and pointed with his finger: sit down. Shelepin sat down. He began to report - the leader stood up. The guest began to rise. The leader waved his hand - sit down. The new First Secretary of the Komsomol Central Committee reported on the situation in the international youth movement. He listened. Didn't ask questions. Said:

- You need to become a member of the All-Union Slavic Committee. This is very important organization.

- All right, Comrade Stalin.

- All right, thanks.

Shelepin got up:

Goodbye, Comrade Stalin.

The leader did not answer.

"The last time I saw Stalin up close," recalled Mikhail Ivanovich Khaldeev, then the first secretary of the Moscow City Komsomol Committee, "on January 21, 1953, at a solemn meeting dedicated to the anniversary of the death of V.I. Lenin. The back of Stalin's head was already clearly sclerotic, covered in red streaks, there was little hair, they gave off a reddish color. I was surprised by his low forehead - not at all the same as depicted in the portraits. He held a pocket watch in his hand and every seven or eight minutes called Malenkov to him to ask how long the report would last. It was evident that Stalin did not feel well, it was hard for him to be in public.

Until recently, he had not observed external signs of malaise, Shepilov recalled. He still spent half the night eating. Without limiting himself, he ate fatty foods. Before dinner, I drank a couple of glasses of cognac and switched to Georgian wines. The labels on the bottles were not factory, but printed on a typewriter.

In recent years, I tried to relax more. Took care of myself. Companions believed that he is healthy.

What was wrong with him?

He suffered typhus twice. He probably contracted tuberculosis while in exile. His right lung was badly damaged, he was breathing heavily and spoke in a low voice. Perhaps that is why he avoided public speaking. He was tormented by colds, sore throats with high fever, diarrhea (sometimes he literally could not move far from the toilet). He was treated by a prominent otolaryngologist Boris Sergeevich Preobrazhensky, who since 1932 was a consultant to the Kremlin Medical and Sanatorium Administration. In 1952, Academician Preobrazhensky was arrested in the "doctors' case".

Judging by the fact that from the mid-thirties they began to invite the famous professor-cardiologist Vladimir Nikitich Vinogradov to him, the leader suffered from high blood pressure and atherosclerosis. Vinogradov is known for his work on the diagnosis and treatment of myocardial infarction. In 1952, he was also imprisoned as a "pestician doctor".

Svetlana Alliluyeva recalled her father:

"On the anniversary of October in the fall of 1952, I went to his dacha with my children ... It seems that he was pleased with the evening and our visit. As usual, we sat at a table laden with all sorts of delicious things - fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts. There was good Georgian wine, real, rustic, - it was brought only for my father in recent years - he knew a lot about it ... It was generally the only time I was with my father and my two children.

And then I visited him on December 21, 1952, the day he turned seventy-three years old. That was the last time I saw him. He looked bad that day. Apparently, he felt signs of illness, maybe hypertension. The usual feast, ordinary faces, familiar conversations, witticisms, jokes from many years ago. Strange, my father doesn't smoke. Strange - he has a red complexion, although he is usually always pale (obviously, there was already a lot of high blood pressure).

For many years he smoked a pipe almost continuously. Shepilov once preoccupied said:

- Comrade Stalin, you smoke so much. But you probably can't?

"You are inattentive," Stalin replied, "but I don't drag on. I'm just like: puff puff. I used to linger, now I don't.

In the last year, I suddenly quit smoking and was very proud of it ...

After the 19th Congress, he did not convene official meetings of the Bureau of the Presidium of the Central Committee.

"When Stalin came from the "near" dacha, he called us through the secretariat, and we came to his office in the Kremlin, and most often to the cinema," Khrushchev said. - We watched the pictures and along the way discussed certain issues during the breaks. After the cinema, Stalin, as a rule, announced that we should go out to eat. At two or three in the morning, anyway, Stalin always called it dinner.

They got into cars and drove to his "near" dacha. There the "session" continued, so to speak. They gathered in the following composition: Stalin, Beria, Malenkov, Khrushchev. Bulganin was not always present at such narrow meetings - dinners or lunches, Kaganovich was even less often present, and Voroshilov was almost never invited.

People close to him could not help but notice the change in his behavior. He became even more suspicious. The leader existed in the world of criminals. If he killed, then why couldn't they kill him?

"When we were driving from the Kremlin to the "near" dacha," Khrushchev recalled, "then we suddenly began to wind through the streets and alleys of Moscow ... They usually got into a car with Stalin

Beria and Malenkov. Most often I got into the same car with Bulganin. I later asked those who sat with Stalin: "Why did you dodge through the alleys?" They answered: "Don't ask us. We did not determine the route. Stalin himself named the streets. He said: turn there, turn here, go this way, go there ... "

I was afraid of assassination. If it was possible to organize the assassination of Trotsky, then why would someone not undertake to organize the assassination of Stalin? Therefore, in recent years, he has changed guards and servants at the "near" dacha. Removed people associated with those he kicked out, because they could harbor hatred and take revenge. He broke up with his long-term assistant Poskrebyshev and the head of security Vlasik, because he suspected that they shared information with Beria. And he didn't want that. I understood: Beria is not the kind of person who, when they come for him, will take a toothbrush and allow himself to be taken to Lefortovo. So he did not want Lavrenty Pavlovich to have time to prepare for his arrest.

Stalin got rid of those who lost their grip, calmed down, did not see how many enemies were around, in a word, he was not suitable for the new Great Terror. Eliminated and those who, in principle, could be dangerous. He proceeded from the fact that the blow will be struck by the one who is nearby.

Resting in the south, Stalin suddenly asked one of his doctors:

- Doctor, tell me, just tell the truth: do you sometimes have a desire to poison me?

From fright and confusion, the doctor did not know what to answer. Looking at him attentively and making sure that he should not be afraid of this man, the leader added:

"I know that you, doctor, are a timid, weak person, you will never do this. But I have enemies who can do it...

At his dacha, more and more constipation and valves constantly appeared. There are so many guards around, but he was afraid ... Every time he went to sleep in another room: either in the bedroom, or in the library, or in the dining room. The servants did not dare to ask questions, so they laid him in several rooms at once.

In 1943, sixteen-year-old Vladimir, the son of the people's commissar of the aviation industry Alexei Ivanovich Shakhurin, mad with passion, shot his girlfriend, the daughter of diplomat Konstantin Alexandrovich Umansky, who was appointed ambassador to Mexico. The young man did not want to part with his beloved. It happened on the stairs of the Big Stone Bridge. Shakhurin Jr. fired the second shot at himself.

Vladimir Shakhurin took the pistol from one of the sons of Anastas Mikoyan - Vano. They opened a criminal case. They entrusted it to Lev Sheinin, widely known for his detective stories, and at that time the head of the investigative unit of the Prosecutor's Office of the USSR.

Lev Sheinin behaved delicately with the children of such high-ranking parents. But they reported to Stalin, who did not like that the Kremlin children had weapons in their hands. Why do they need pistols? Are they going to commit a terrorist act? Kill the leader?

The investigation was transferred from the prosecutor's office to the People's Commissariat of State Security. The Kremlin children were taken care of by the head of the investigative unit for especially important cases of the NKGB, State Security Commissioner Lev Vlodzimirsky. He set up a case for a "youthful anti-Soviet organization" and arrested twenty-eight young people. Among them are two children of Mikoyan - sixteen-year-old Vano and fourteen-year-old Sergo, as well as the sons of Voroshilov's adjutant Lieutenant General Rafail Pavlovich Khmel'nitsky and nephew Nadezhda Alliluyeva.

Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan did not dare to stand up for the children, although for him the family was of great importance. His sons spent six months in the Lubyanka. The case was completely empty, so they received a year of exile. They left for Stalinabad (Dushanbe) and returned to Moscow. Stalin asked Anastas Ivanovich:

"Where are your sons who were condemned?"

Mikoyan explained that the elder is studying at the Air Force Engineering Academy

named after N.E. Zhukovsky, and the younger one - at the Institute of International Relations.

- Do they deserve to study in a Soviet higher educational institution? Stalin asked with a threat in his voice.

According to Stepan Anastasovich Mikoyan, general, test pilot, Hero of the Soviet Union, the father "was sure that now his children would be immediately expelled, and maybe even arrested (this was the period of a new wave of repressions). But nothing happened. Apparently, something distracted Stalin and he forgot about it.

Knowing the leader's fears, state security investigators at all trials, even those involving schoolchildren, included in the indictment the preparation of a terrorist act against the leader.

On June 21, 1948, Stalin received a special message about the arrest of the "terrorist" artist Daniil Leonidovich Andreev, son of the famous writer:

"Andreev tried to find out the location of I.V. Stalin and the access roads to it, but, having learned that the dacha was heavily guarded, as he himself admitted, he refused to carry out his enemy plan in this place. Andreev nurtured the idea of an attempt on I.V. Stalin at the State Academic Bolshoi Theater during a performance or a ceremonial meeting ...

Several times he was able to see how the car of the head of the Soviet government, heading into the city, before reaching Arbatskaya Square, turned right into Bolshoy Afanasevsky Lane and through Maly Afanasevsky, bypassing the monument to Gogol, went out onto Frunze Street. He studied the possibility of firing from the dentist's apartment at 9 Arbat Street at the car of the head of the Soviet government.

It is difficult to say to what extent the leader himself believed in these stories, and to what extent he considered it necessary to maintain the heat of repression. He's been out of touch with real life for a long time. Lived in a completely different world. It is not so easy to understand what thoughts he was overcome. But the fear for his life grew stronger.

Two guards got into the car with the leader. One took a seat next to the driver, the second settled in the back seat. Stalin was always located between them - on the folding seat. He was accompanied by two cars with operational staff. In the first - shift supervisor and three officers. In the second, there are three more field security officers. In 1952, the first radiotelephone communication devices appeared, very bulky, they were installed in the trunks of security cars.

"When I wanted to cross the Arbat at the Arbat Gates," the writer Yuri Olesha noted in his diary, "someone's voice, which sounded thickly above my ear, told me to stop. I realized rather than saw that I was stopped by a police officer.

- Stop.

I stopped. Cars, swaying sideways, rolled towards me. It was not difficult to guess who was in the first. I saw the interior of the cabin, black as in summer when the shutters were closed, and in it, especially bright among this darkness - the brightness of almost spectral decay - a band. In a moment everything disappeared, everything moved in its own order. I moved too."

In the last years of his life, Stalin himself appointed the route of movement and constantly changed it. Colonel Novik from the security department recalled: "The following case belongs to the period when the "doctors' case" was conducted. Once, on the way from the "near" dacha to Moscow, Stalin ordered the driver to go not by the usual route, but along the old, abandoned, snow-covered road through the Sparrow Hills. The heavy vehicle stalled and burrowed into the snow. Stalin was extremely dissatisfied and in his hearts said: "You are taking me along the same route. Carry under the bullets!

In the last months of his life, he stopped even warning his bodyguards where he was going. He got into the car and only then said where he was going. But the guards knew his two favorite routes: to the Bolshoi Theater - to listen to the opera, or to the Kremlin - to watch a movie. Just in case, both there and there they laid a table.

One day Colonel Novik was checking posts at the Bolshoi Theatre. Stalin appeared heading to his box. Seeing the set table in the room in front of the box, he asked:
Who said that I would come here?

Newbie explained. Stalin silently walked into the box.

The "near" dacha was one of the most protected objects in the country. But to Stalin, no measures seemed sufficient. Tormented by fear, he usually spent the night at work: looking through papers, writing, reading. Before going to bed, he stood at the window for a long time: were there any traces on the ground, did someone else come up to the house? In the last winter, he even forbade shoveling snow - you would rather see footprints in the snow.

"We came to the "near" dacha - there, constipation intensifies in the doors and gates, - Khrushchev recalled. - All sorts of new valves appeared, then almost collapsible barricades. Well, who can go to Stalin's dacha when there are two fences, and dogs run between them, an electric alarm has been installed and there are other means of protection?

Barbed wire, a high double fence, between the walls of the fence there was a wooden flooring, on which sentries in special soft shoes were on duty. The mouse couldn't get past them. On the outer contour of the dacha, as on the state border, a photo relay was installed, which worked with any movement. Mostly reacted to hares. People did not approach the cottage. On the inside, watchful officers of the security department were on duty with dogs breaking off their leashes.

"The main house," Captain Yuri Solovyov said, "was connected by a long passage with a service building, where the kitchen and living quarters were located - for the commandant of the dacha, the officer on duty at the communications console, two attached, a cook, waitresses, kitchen workers, a dietary nutrition doctor, auxiliary worker, hairdresser.

State security sergeant Varvara Vasilievna Istomina also lived here, who from pre-war times served as a waiter at the dacha. She was instructed to bring food to the leader and carry away dirty dishes. Her education was limited to five classes of the school and the courses of the attendants of the Dynamo sports society. Over the years, the leader has become accustomed to it. In July 1952, Istomina received a promotion - she became the mistress of the main house of the "near" dacha.

From the beginning of 1953, Stalin was no longer interested in much, except for the affairs of the MGB. Khrushchev told how he and Beria walked past the door of the dining room of Stalin's dacha, and Lavrenty Pavlovich pointed to a table littered with a mountain of unopened red packets. These were documents of particular importance, which continued to flow to the dying Stalin. It was clear that no one had touched them.

- This is probably where your packages are, - said Beria.

Already after the death of Stalin, Khrushchev inquired about how they dealt with the papers sent daily to the leader. The head of security confessed:

- We had a special person who opened them, and then we sent content back to those who sent it.

The fact that Stalin lost interest in what was happening and practically stopped working, only a few people knew. The rest were sure that everything was going on as before.

On February 27, the leader arrived at the Bolshoi Theater, where they gave "Swan Lake". He ordered his new assistant Malin to connect him with Malenkov, and he ordered the next day to appear at the "near" dacha along with Beria, Bulganin and Khrushchev.

On February 28 at 11 pm the guests arrived. When they drove up to the wooden gate, the security officer opened the car door so that he could be seen, and called the last name - his own, and not the member of the Central Committee Presidium, whom he accompanied. The senior guard of the dacha came out of the gate to look at the passenger. In the bright light of the searchlights, the face of the person sitting in the car was clearly visible. Moreover, the duty officer warned the officers who guarded the gate about the appearance of guests.

The guests walked into the main house, and their limousines were driven to a ten-car garage. Three boxes were occupied by cars of the Stalinist guards. The rest were intended for guest operational vehicles. There were also rooms for security officers, a small dining room, a storage room for weapons and a clothes dryer.

The host and guests had dinner together.

"While the guests were traveling, preparations were underway in the main house - serving the upcoming feast," said Yuri Solovyov. - The commandant of the dacha was usually informed of the number of expected guests. The service staff had to carry everything on trays, walking a considerable distance from the kitchen stove in the service house along a long hallway leading to the dining room. Many of the attendants developed an occupational disease of the joints of the hands from the severity of the transferred.

Cutlery was placed on the table. They brought cognac, vodka, dry wines, spices, herbs, vegetables, mushrooms. They baked their own bread.

Captain Solovyov: "There were no attendants in the hall during lunch. Regardless of their position, each of those present at the meal served himself myself. Lunch first courses in large earthenware bowls were located on a separate table, and clean dishes were placed here, in a slide. Stalin was the first to pour cabbage soup, soup or fish soup from a bowl into a plate, and with a plate he went to his traditional place at the table. Later, the second was brought, and each again independently chose a dish. Tea was poured from a large, boiling samovar, which stood on a separate table. The teapot with tea leaves was heated on the burner.

In November 1951, Stalin ordered that the Minister of Foreign Trade, Mikhail Alekseevich Menshikov, be replaced. His son, economist Stanislav Menshikov, assured: "Father was punished for the so-called banana story. Stalin was convinced that bananas prolong his life, and therefore, when rotten bananas were placed on his table, he was indignant and laid the blame on the Minister of Foreign Trade, although the guards were directly responsible for serving the leader.

In the large dining room there was a wide polished table, a mahogany grand piano, and two sofas. On one of them, the leader died on March 5 ... Stalin loved musical broadcasts on the radio and listened to the records that were brought from the record factory in Aprelevka. Rated: "good", "demolition", "bad." and "rubbish". Leave the notes you like. He had a domestic hand-cranked gramophone and a large automatic player donated by the Americans in 1945.

That day, Stalin was in a great mood, he drank more than usual. The guests left after five in the morning. Khrushchev recalled: "When we went out into the lobby, Stalin, as usual, came out to see us off. He joked a lot."

The party was the last in the life of the owner.

In the circumstances of the last hours of his life, much remains unclear. But it was possible to establish that Stalin did not go to bed that night. When they found him, he was in clothes. And he didn't take off his dentures. If he lay down, he would definitely take them off: anyone who wears dentures knows why this should be done at night.

At ten in the morning, the attached ones changed - that was the name of the officers of the personal protection. Colonel Ivan Vasilyevich Khrustalev passed his shift and went to rest. Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Gavrilovich Starostin and Lieutenant Colonel Vasily Mikhailovich Tukov took over the duty. Starostin served in the guard since 1937, Tukov since 1935.

Stalin always got up very late. He turned on the light in the room and the guards knew where he was. But at noon, he, as a rule, was already up. When Stalin needed something, the leader picked up the receiver of the internal telephone, and the officer on duty answered. He was inseparably at the telephone console located in one of the rooms of the service house. They also called from the city.

And on that day, March 1, the officers were waiting in vain for some kind of signal. The leader didn't call. Didn't call anyone. Didn't ask for anything. And they themselves did not dare to go into the big house. Leader

forbade him to be disturbed.

Because of his own manic fears, the guards and servants did not dare to disturb him and enter his room. They did not know what to do, they sat and waited.

At half-past ten in the evening, as always, the Feldsvyaz delivered mail from the city. It was supposed to be handed over immediately. Major Pyotr Vasilyevich Lozgachev carried the sealed packages to the leader. From the pre-war years, he also served in the security department, in October 1952 he received a promotion - he was appointed assistant commandant of the "near" dacha. It was his job to deliver the mail.

The major was the first to see the leader who had fallen into unconsciousness:

"I went through one room, looked into the bathroom, looked around the large hall, but Stalin was neither there nor there. I had already left the large hall and into the corridor, and noticed the open door to the small dining room, from which electric lighting leaked. I looked there and saw a tragic picture in front of me. Stalin was lying on the carpet near the table, as if leaning on his arm. Everything in me froze. He probably hadn't lost consciousness yet, but he couldn't speak either. I ran up and asked: "Comrade Stalin, what is the matter with you?" True, he wet himself during this time and wants to correct something with his left hand, and I told him: "Maybe I should call a doctor?" And he answered so indistinctly: "Dz ... Dz ..." - yelled and that's it. The pocket watch of the 1st watch factory and the Pravda newspaper lay on the floor.

Stalin was unconscious and only wheezed.

Major Lozgachev on the internal phone called for help from both attached - lieutenant colonel Starostin and Tukov. Together with them, the waiter-waitress of the "Middle" facility, state security sergeant Matryona Ivanovna Butusova, came running.

She timidly asked the leader:

- Comrade Stalin, put you on the couch?

He seemed to nod. They put him on a large sofa, covered him with a blanket.

Apparently, after the departure of the guests, Stalin retired to the library. Here he had a sudden cerebral hemorrhage, and he did not have time to call anyone. He lost consciousness and fell to the floor by the sofa. So he lay for several hours without medical attention.

Attached, following the instructions, called their chief, Minister of State Security Ignatiev, who also acted as head of the security department. They reported that they found the leader on the floor. The minister ordered:

"Call Comrade Beria or Comrade Malenkov.

We got through to Malenkov. Georgy Maksimilianovich was, as it were, the eldest among the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee. At two in the morning he arrived at the dacha, taking Beria with him. One did not dare! The officers reported that they found Stalin on the floor, lifted him up and laid him on the sofa. Now he seems to be sleeping.

In the small dining room, well known to Malenkov and Beria, everything was the same as the day before, when they last came to the "near" dacha. In the center is a large table, a little further away - access to the glazed veranda. Next to the bedroom with bathroom. The leader lay on the sofa, covered with a blanket, and did not react to their appearance. Resting? Dozing?

The guests were very uncomfortable. Malenkov and Beria did not even enter the room: what if Will Stalin wake up and see that they caught him in this position? They left hastily.

In the morning, the guards reported that Comrade Stalin had not come to his senses. Then the three of us arrived - Malenkov, Beria and Khrushchev. And only on the morning of March 2, the first doctors appeared at Stalin's bedside - from the Kremlin hospital. By evening, the best doctors in Moscow were gathered. All of these were new people, because almost all of the doctors who treated Stalin were arrested. The doctors went to the leader with trembling knees - they were not sure that they would return home safely.

Appointed on January 27, 1953 as Minister of Health (from the post of director of the Central Institute of Balneology), Andrei Fedorovich Tretyakov explained to the assembled doctors that the leader had a brain hemorrhage with loss of consciousness, speech, paralysis of his right arm and leg. Stalin was breathing heavily, sometimes moaning. Did not regain consciousness.

The first doctor brought to Stalin was afraid to take his hand to measure his pulse. Minister of State Security Ignatiev arrived and was afraid to enter the house. The leader was unconscious, and they were still in awe of him. One could say that, in a certain sense, Stalin killed himself. He created such an atmosphere of fear around him that his own assistants and guards did not dare to help him at the hour of death.

The leader was lying motionless on a sofa in the large dining room, where he was transferred by the guards. The sofa was moved away from the wall to make it easier for doctors to approach the patient. A screen was placed by the sofa. The council began at midnight. They prescribed the treatment adopted in such cases, dragged the tables on which they laid out the medicines. Bring in medical equipment.

On the morning of March 3, the doctors told Malenkov that death was inevitable.

Georgy Maximilianovich, already retired, told his son Andrei:

- I, Molotov, Beria, Mikoyan, Voroshilov, Kaganovich arrived at Stalin's "near" dacha. He was paralyzed, could not speak, could only move one hand. Weak, calling movements of the hand. Molotov approaches Stalin. Stalin makes a sign - "go away." Beria fits. Again, the sign - "go away." Suitable Mikoyan - "move away." Then I come up. Stalin holds my hand without letting go. A few minutes later he dies without saying a word, only moving his lips silently.

It is impossible to challenge the testimony of a participant in the events, but, as lawyers say, the testimony of a witness is not supported by the circumstances of the case. Stalin had a stroke, a brain hemorrhage. He lost his speech. The right half of the body was paralyzed. Several times he opened his eyes, everyone rushed to him, but it is not known whether he recognized anyone.

That.

Beria caustically interrogated the professors on duty at the bedside about the slightest zigzags in the course of the illness. It seems that the sucking inner anxiety did not leave the comrades-in-arms: who knows if Stalin will get out, if he will overcome the disease by a miracle?

The first message about Stalin's illness was broadcast on the radio on March 4 at 6:30 in the morning.

On the same morning, under the influence of emergency medical measures in the course of Stalin's illness, a clearing seemed to come. He began to breathe more evenly, opened one eye, and it seemed to those present that signs of consciousness flickered in his eyes. Moreover, it seemed to them that the leader slyly winked with his half-opened eye: nothing, they say, we will get out! Lavrenty Pavlovich was just at the bedside. Seeing these signs of regaining consciousness, he knelt down in fear. However, this only lasted a few moments.

Fortunately for his associates, Stalin never recovered.

In his hour of death, the leader was completely alone. Like all the last years.

He didn't even want to see the kids. Daughter and son could not get to their father for a long time. But Stalin was not so busy, he had time for midnight feasts with his subordinates was.

Despite his Caucasian origin, he was an infinitely cold person. He was perfectly aware of what he was doing. His actions were dictated by a sober and cynical calculation. He saw that his decisions were not perceived in the country so unconditionally. He needed to instill fear in everyone. Without this, the system would not work. And the leader got his way. Fear paralyzing body and soul emanated from him.

As one of his subordinates put it, Stalin played the feeling of fear better than Paganini played the violin. After all, how did he give assignments? Either the deadlines were unrealistic, or the order was given in such a way that no matter how you do it, you will still be to blame.

Did he have friends?

Once upon a time, Molotov and Voroshilov naively thought that they were friends with the leader ...

In his youth, Stalin met Sergei Ivanovich Kavtaradze, a man of fantastic destiny. Coming from a noble family, he joined the Social Democrats at the age of eighteen. They were friends with Stalin. For one year, from February 1922 to January 1923, he headed the government of Soviet Georgia. But Kavtaradze shared

the views of Leon Trotsky, therefore he was expelled from the party and sent to a settlement. Then planted. Served the first term - planted again.

After Stalin's death, Kavtaradze will tell that he signed interrogation protocols, "being under the constant influence of unbearable methods of mental and physical influence - threats of execution, mock execution, physical and nervous exhaustion bordering on insanity, for example, it seemed to me that my head was drying up and shrinking. skull".

In 1939, he was suddenly transferred to Moscow and taken to the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Beria. Lavrenty Pavlovich announced that his case was closed and he was free. Kavtaradze did not believe Beria. But he and his wife were released, they were given housing and work. Perhaps in a good moment, Stalin remembered a friend of his youth. And unexpectedly visited old friends. This fantastic story has become a legend. Late in the evening, the leader knocked on the door of the communal apartment in which Sergei Ivanovich and Sofya Abramovna Kavtaradze were settled. They sat at the table for half the night. After that, Sergei Kavtaradze was taken to a leadership position in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. He became deputy people's commissar, went as ambassador to Romania.

Stalin loved beautiful gestures. In his entire life, he made only a few such deeds, but the whole country spoke about them for decades.

Did he love anyone?

Stalin had three children. The son of Yakov was born by the first wife, Ekaterina (Kato) Semyonovna Svanidze, who died early. Nadezhda Alliluyeva, who committed suicide, gave birth to a son, Vasily, and a daughter, Svetlana. Everyone's fate is tragic.

Vasily after his death went to prison and died a young man. Svetlana fled the country.

Chief's son

Three weeks after the death of the leader, on March 26, 1953, by order of the Minister of Defense Marshal Bulganin, Lieutenant General of Aviation Vasily Iosifovich Stalin was transferred to the reserve without the right to wear a military uniform. And a month later, on April 28, the son of the leader, from whom dust particles had previously been blown away, was arrested.

The arrest warrant was signed by the head of the investigative unit for especially important Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lieutenant General Lev Vlodzimirsky.

Why was Stalin's son treated so harshly?

The machinations of Lavrenty Pavlovich, who took revenge on his son for his father? But Beria himself was arrested two months later, General Vlodzimirsky followed him, and Vasily Stalin continued to sit.

He was accused of drinking and "didn't show up for work. He received reports from his subordinates at his apartment or in his country house. He planted servility in the apparatus subordinate to him. But they don't get jailed for it. They were accused of wasting public funds. But this is not the most serious crime. The real charge was brought against him under the infamous Article 58 of the Criminal Code - anti-Soviet statements.

He was tried in an expedited procedure adopted after Kirov's assassination in December 1934: without a lawyer and without a prosecutor. It was his father who invented it in order to send "enemies of the people" to the other world as soon as possible. I didn't think it would turn against his own son.

The case of Vasily Stalin was considered by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court and on September 2, 1955 sentenced him to eight years in prison. He was supposed to be sent to a camp, but he was kept in the Vladimir prison, away from people. Why such severe punishment? For drunkenly promising to go to foreign correspondents and say everything he thinks about the current leaders of the country?

The verdict recorded: for illegal spending and misappropriation of state

property (abuse of official position under especially aggravating circumstances - Article 193-17 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR) and for "hostile attacks and anti-Soviet slanderous fabrications against the leaders of the CPSU and the Soviet state" (and this is a deadly article 58-10).

His sister, Svetlana Stalina, recalls that Vasily was arrested after drinking with some foreigners. Later, in the course of the investigation, scams, embezzlement, and the use of one's official position surfaced. The investigation went on for more than two years. The Chekists arrested Vasily's adjutants, his colleagues, and they quickly signed the necessary investigation of evidence.

But the main thing is different - people returned from places not so remote, who ended up in prison with the light hand of Vasily Stalin. And these were not ordinary people, but marshals and generals. Not only the big military, but also the party leaders really had reason to hate the younger Stalin. First of all, the all-powerful Georgy Maximilianovich Malenkov, whom Vasily Stalin almost ruined his career.

In 1946, Stalin sent a letter to members of the Politburo stating that major crimes had been uncovered in the aviation industry - the industry gave aviation unusable aircraft, and the command of the air force turned a blind eye to this. It is believed that it was Aviation General Vasily Iosifovich Stalin who complained to his father about bad aircraft.

The curator of the aviation industry was a member of the Politburo and secretary of the Central Committee Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov. On May 4, 1946, Stalin, by a special decision of the Politburo, deprived him of the post of secretary of the Central Committee:

"To establish that Comrade Malenkov, as the chief of the aviation industry and the acceptance of aircraft - over the air force, is morally responsible for the outrages that have been revealed in the work of these departments (the production and acceptance of low-quality aircraft), that he, knowing about these outrages, did not signal them to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks.

The Ministry of State Security has already begun to collect evidence against Malenkov, preparing for his arrest. The investigators involved in the aviation business said, not without pleasure: "Malenkov got burned." Malenkov was also waiting for arrest. But Stalin changed his mind and returned Malenkov his location.

So, it turns out that Vasily Stalin was punished because he once complained to his father about the generals and party officials? Revenge? This is one reason. There is another - he ceased to be a celestial, and he was no longer allowed those liberties that were forgiven to the son of the leader.

Vasily was not liked by the Minister of War, Marshal Bulganin, with whom the younger Stalin behaved in a familiar, if not boorish way. After the death of the leader, everything changed, but Vasily Iosifovich continued to talk with Bulganin, and with other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, just as before.

He publicly said about Bulganin:
"Killing him isn't enough!"

Vasily's words were recorded and reported to the party leadership.

Vasily Iosifovich was summoned by the head of the Main Directorate of Personnel of the Ministry of Defense, Colonel-General Alexander Sergeevich Zheltov, who gave a copy of the dismissal order. Vasily asked to give him some work.

Bulganin accepted it. Offered:

- Will you go as the head of the flying club in Morshansk?

Vasily exploded:

This is a position for a first lieutenant. I won't go to her.

Bulganin said:

"Then I don't have a place for you in the army."

Apparently there was another motive. Subconsciously, by planting the younger Stalin, the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee were freed from the mystical fear of this name. Stalin's son-in-law

- Yuri Andreyevich Zhdanov, who was in charge of a department in the Central Committee of the CPSU, was also expelled from Moscow. After the death of the leader, three secretaries of the Central Committee - Suslov, Pospelov and Nikolai Nikolaevich Shatalin (who had just been elected to this high position) had a conversation with him at once. Suslov asked:

- Where did you work before the Central Committee apparatus?

- He was an assistant at Moscow University.

- Apparently, it is advisable for you to return there, - Suslov stated.

But they did not want to leave him in the capital. A week later, Zhdanov was summoned again, and Pyotr Pospelov made him another offer:

- The Central Committee believes that you should gain experience in local party work. Would it be useful to work in the science department of the Chelyabinsk or Rostov regional committee.

Yuri Andreevich chose Rostov, where he stayed. They didn't touch him again.

Stalin's first wife died in 1907, two months after the birth of her son. Stalin had no time to deal with them.

When Jacob fell in love, his father forbade him to marry. A 19-year-old boy tried to commit suicide by shooting himself. He survived, but was in the hospital for three months. Stalin wrote to Nadezhda Alliluyeva: "Tell Yasha from me that he acted like a hooligan and blackmailer, with whom I have and cannot have anything else in common."

Another mocking phrase is known, thrown in the hearts of a father to his son:

- Ha, missed it!

Yakov still got married, went to Leningrad to the Alliluyevs. A girl was born. But she died very young. After that, the marriage fell apart. Jacob returned to his father. In 1930, Yakov Dzhugashvili entered the Institute of Railway Engineers. In 1936 he received a diploma and was assigned to the Moscow ZIS plant - the Stalin plant. He met Olga Golysheva, who came to Moscow to study. However, the marriage with Olga remained unregistered. When she was already expecting a child, disagreements began. Olga went to give birth to Uryupinsk to her parents. Yakov did not go there, but at his insistence, his son was given the name Dzhugashvili.

In 1937, on the advice of his father, Yakov entered the Artillery Academy. In 1938 he married for the third time to Julia Meltzer. They had a daughter, Galya. Yakov Iosifovich graduated from the Artillery Academy named after F.E. Dzerzhinsky in May 1941 and was assigned to the 14th howitzer artillery regiment of the 14th Panzer Division.

On June 23, 1941, on the second day of the war, Yakov Dzhugashvili went to the front. The father did not want to see him. The division stationed near Moscow was transferred to the Western Front. On June 26, Yakov sent a short postcard from Vyazma to his wife, promising to write in more detail, but did not have time.

On July 11, 1941, the Germans broke into Vitebsk. As a result, three of our armies were immediately surrounded. Among them is the 14th howitzer-artillery regiment of the 14th tank division, in which senior lieutenant Dzhugashvili served as battery commander. Some units broke through, and the command of the regiment, not knowing that Dzhugashvili had not left the encirclement, introduced him to the Order of the Red Banner. But Jacob did not receive the award. Moscow already knew that he was a prisoner.

He, as many did, buried the documents, but on July 16 he was taken prisoner. Apparently, he hastened to recognize himself as the son of Stalin, fearing to die in the camp. On July 17, he was allowed (or forced) to write a short letter to his father, which reached Moscow through diplomatic channels:

"Dear father!

I am a prisoner, healthy, and will soon be sent to one of the officer camps in Germany.

Handling is good.

I wish you health. Hi all.

Yasha".

His photographs were used in German leaflets which were dropped over

location of Soviet troops. One of them said:

"By order of Stalin, Tymoshenko and your political committees are teaching you that the Bolsheviks do not surrender. However, the Red Army always go over to the Germans. In order to intimidate you, the commissars lie to you that the Germans mistreat prisoners.

Stalin's own son proved by his own example that this was a lie. He surrendered, BECAUSE ANY RESISTANCE OF THE GERMAN ARMY FROM NOW IS USELESS!

Follow the example of Stalin's son - he is alive, healthy and feeling great. Why would you make useless sacrifices, go to certain death, when even the son of your supreme boss has already surrendered."

One can imagine that the leader was furious. He demanded that the Red Army soldiers fight to the last and prefer death to captivity, and then the unloved son gave him such a surprise!

Many admired Stalin's phrase from the film "Liberation", when he allegedly answered the German offer to exchange his son, who was taken prisoner, for a German commander:

- I do not change a simple soldier for a field marshal.

It is believed that Hitler was trying to help out the captured former commander of the 6th army of Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus, and Stalin refused him. In fact, the idea arose to exchange senior lieutenant of the Red Army Yakov Dzhugashvili, who had been languishing in a prisoner of war camp since July 1941, for Wehrmacht lieutenant Leo Raubal. Hitler's nephew was taken prisoner in Stalingrad in 1943. The exchange would be equivalent: son for nephew, lieutenant for lieutenant. So the phrase attributed to Stalin is a myth.

But these words meant that the leader is ruthless both to his children and to strangers. The father could save his son by exchanging him for a captured German, and there would be nothing wrong with that. But he didn't want to. Few people thought that even paternal feelings had died in this man. It seems that he simply did not love his first child. Once he said rather wickedly about Yakov:

- Nothing will save him, and he strives for me, because it is beneficial for him.

Stalin did not like the daughter-in-law either. When Yakov Dzhugashvili was captured, his wife was arrested. The leader ordered to deal with the daughter-in-law: was she involved in the surrender of her son as a prisoner? Crazy guess...

Now some historians claim that the real Yakov Dzhugashvili died on the battlefield, and someone else pretended to be Stalin's son. But no facts have been made public that would make it possible to dispute the fact that the leader's son was captured in the summer of 1941 and died two years later. Stalin himself did not doubt this at all, as did the employees of the Soviet special services. If even the slightest doubt had been revealed, Stalin would have called the man who turned to him from captivity an impostor.

Vasily Stalin, having learned that his elder brother was in captivity, remarked contemptuously:

- Here's a fool - he couldn't shoot himself.

He was obviously repeating someone's words. Paternal?

Vasily Stalin could not bear this heavy burden - to be the son of a great leader. Too much hope was placed on him. And too quickly his father was disappointed in him. I saw that he would not be an heir.

He had almost no relationship with his father, like Svetlana. The father looked at them with pity. Neither son nor daughter could awaken fatherly love in him. Perhaps Stalin did not have these feelings at all. He remembered Vasily, only appointing him to another high position or removing him from it.

On the one hand, spoiled, on the other, deprived of a normal family, warmth and affection, Vasily was brought up by Stalin's guards. He showed early impudence and arrogance, unwillingness to learn anything and the habit of enjoying life. Fortunately, he was one of the few in the country who were allowed to do this. And until the death of his father he was surrounded

sycophants and drinking buddies.

In the summer of 1948, Vasily became commander of the air forces of the Moscow Military District. He was only twenty-seven years old. In May 1949, his father promoted him to lieutenant general. Assigning a high rank has become an occasion for endless drinking.

On December 9, 1950, Yegorov, head of the Kremlin Medical and Sanatorium Department, reported to Stalin:

"I consider it my duty to report to you on the state of health of Vasily Iosifovich.

Vasily Iosifovich suffers from exhaustion of the nervous system, chronic catarrh of the stomach and anemia. The cause of these diseases is excessive alcohol abuse.

November 16 p. d. Vasily Iosifovich suddenly (at home, at about one in the morning, while watching a movie) developed an epileptic seizure - a complete loss of consciousness, general convulsions of the muscles of the body, a bite of the tongue and the release of a foamy liquid from the oral cavity Unfortunately, over the past seven to ten days, Vasily Iosifovich again began to drink a lot, and in connection with this, symptoms of acute intoxication again appeared (disgust for food, weight loss, increased irritability, poor sleep).

Beliefs and demands of doctors to stop drinking alcohol what was not brought. I ask for your assistance."

On July 27, 1952, a parade was held in Tushino on the occasion of the air fleet holiday, Vasily Stalin commanded it ex officio. In the evening there was a reception. Vasily appeared already drunk. In the presence of his father, he behaved boorishly with officers, in public he cursed the commander-in-chief of the country's air forces.

Stalin senior was angry. On August 13, 1952, Vasily was seconded to the command of the Air Force Commander-in-Chief, and on September 5 he was enrolled as a student at the Military Academy of the General Staff. But he did not go to classes, he sat in the country and drank. On December 21, he came to congratulate his father on his birthday, but, according to the Stalinist guards, the conversation did not work out. Vasily returned to the bottle. This went on until the father died, and he was not arrested ...

In the Vladimir prison, the leader's son was kept under the surname Vasiliev. He, still a very young man, was already very ill - apparently, on the basis of the immoderate use of strong drinks. Yes, and the Soviet prison quickly destroys health.

Khrushchev once asked the KGB chairman Shelepin:

- And how does Vasily Stalin behave? Talk to him, consult with Svetlana.

Stalin Jr. swore to Shelepin that he would behave with dignity.

Khrushchev said:

I'm all for releasing him.

Fulfilling the will of the first secretary, on January 5, 1960, KGB chairman Shelepin and prosecutor general Rudenko reported to the Central Committee:

"Stalin V.I. has been imprisoned for six years and eight months. During this period of time, the administration of places of deprivation of liberty is characterized positively. Currently, he has a number of serious diseases (diseases of the heart, stomach, vessels of the legs and other ailments). In view of the foregoing, we ask the Central Committee of the CPSU to consider the following proposals:

apply to Stalin V.I. private amnesty, release him from further serving a sentence and remove a criminal record;

instruct the Moscow City Council to provide Stalin V.I. three-room apartment in Moscow;

instruct the USSR Ministry of Defense to grant Stalin a pension in accordance with the law, provide him with a ticket to a sanatorium for a period of three months and return the property confiscated during the arrest personally belonging to him;

give Stalin V.I. thirty thousand rubles as a one-time allowance.

On January 8, the proposals of Shelepin and Rudenko were accepted.

On January 11, Vasily Stalin was released ahead of schedule. But none of what he was promised, he did not have time to use. He took to drink, and three months later, on April 16, he was again arrested "for continuing anti-Soviet activities." It was about the fact that he visited the Chinese embassy, where he made a "slandorous statement of an anti-Soviet nature," according to KGB documents. Vasily Iosifovich asked the Chinese embassy to allow him to go to Beijing for treatment. The party leadership was not going to let the leader's son go to China, with which relations were deteriorating before our eyes.

Voroshilov, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, had a paternal conversation with Vasily Stalin. The elderly marshal reproached him for drinking:

"I've known you since the day you were born, I had to babysit you. And I only wish you well. But now I will tell you unpleasant, bad things. You must become a different person. You are still young, but what a bald head you have. Your father did not have, although he lived to be seventy-four years old. All this is because you lead a too stormy life, you do not live the way you should. You bear the surname of a great man, you are his son, and you must not forget it ..

Vasily Stalin repented and asked to be given a job. Khrushchev did not like Voroshilov's conversation with Stalin. On April 15, he arranged a discussion of their conversation. All members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, as one, attacked Voroshilov, although Kliment Efremovich did nothing wrong, but in relation to Stalin Jr. they were not at all embarrassed in expressions.

"Vasily Stalin is an anti-Soviet, an adventurer," said Mikhail Andreevich Suslov, a member of the presidium and secretary of the Central Committee. "We need to stop his activities, cancel the decree on early release and put him back in custody.

"Vasily Stalin is a state criminal," agreed Alexei Nikolaevich Kosygin, a member of the Central Committee Presidium and Khrushchev's deputy in the government. He needs to be isolated. And Comrade Voroshilov behaves incorrectly.

In the decision of the Presidium of the Central Committee, they wrote:

"In connection with the criminal antisocial behavior of V. Stalin, cancel the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of January 11, 1960 on the early release of V. Stalin from further punishment and the removal of a criminal record; place V. Stalin in places of deprivation of liberty to serve his sentence in accordance with the verdict of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR of September 2, 1953.

Vasily Stalin was returned to prison to serve his sentence in full. A year later, the sentence ended. They did not want to let him into Moscow. Shelepin and Rudenko suggested "as an exception to the current legislation, send V.I. Stalin after serving his sentence in exile for a period of five years in the city of Kazan (foreigners are prohibited from entering this city). In case of unauthorized departure from the specified place, according to the law, he can be held criminally liable."

On April 28, 1961, Vasily Iosifovich was transferred to Kazan. They brought him to the chairman of the KGB of Tatarstan, who explained to the son of the leader that he was not allowed to leave the city for the next five years. At large, Vasily Stalin, already a seriously ill person, lived less than a year. They gave him a one-room apartment, put a pension of one hundred and fifty rubles. He drank constantly. Drinking companions, neighbors and just random people willingly told about himself, pointedly explained:

They put me in jail because I know too much.

He did not receive a passport for a long time, because he was required to change his last name to Dzhugashvili, and he flatly refused. Finally, the local KGB bargained with him. Vasily demanded to give him a bigger apartment, increase his pension and allocate him a car. Moscow agreed with his demands.

On January 9, 1962, he was issued a passport. He immediately married a nurse, Maria Ignatievna Shevargina. She looked after him at the Institute of Surgery named after A.V. Vishnevsky, where he lay after prison, and followed him to Kazan.

The apartment was equipped with listening equipment, so the security officers knew that Vasily continued to vilify Khrushchev:

- Who is Nikita? He was the secretary of the party bureau at the academy, and his mother studied there. She brought him to the house. His father - fuck - the secretary of the district committee of the party. Fuck - the second secretary of the MC. Fuck - the first secretary of the MK and the secretary of the Central Committee ...

He looked very bad. Doctors had difficulty getting him out of the binge. On March 14, 1962, a teacher from the Ulyanovsk Tank School came to his house. A native of Georgia, he brought with him a large amount of red wine. A three-day binge led to alcohol intoxication, and Vasily Stalin's heart could not stand it.

On March 19, the new chairman of the KGB, Vladimir Efimovich Semichastny, reported to Khrushchev: "According to preliminary data, the cause of death was alcohol abuse. Dzhugashvili, despite repeated warnings from doctors,

drank regularly."

The head of the KGB proposed to bury the former general Vasily Iosifovich Dzhugashvili in Kazan without military honors. The offer was accepted.

The early death of Vasily Stalin gave rise to rumors that he was assassinated. Who could it do and why?

In 1962, Georgy Malenkov, who had been expelled from the party, had already been retired. Khrushchev had no personal relationship with Vasily Stalin. And in general, new people were already in power, who practically did not know Vasily Iosifovich.

Maybe the KGB really had a hand in the early death of the leader's son? There were rumors that many seem very similar to the truth. In Kazan, he was cared for by a nurse who forced him to marry herself and adopt her children. They assure that she was a KGB informant and killed him - she gave special injections. True, it is not clear why she had to kill the man whom she married to herself?

And why would the KGB eliminate Vasily Stalin? If he again began to be frank with drinking companions, he would simply be imprisoned. In addition, it was no longer so easy to organize a "wet business". The chairman of the KGB had to draw up a paper, the first secretary of the Central Committee, that is, in this case Khrushchev, to sign it. It was necessary to find performers who would not think that the next boss might put them in prison for this. There were no such cases in the post-Stalin period; in any case, nothing is known about this, although after 1991 state security documents about the most odious crimes were declassified.

There were also rumors that, in fact, the nurse who cared for Vasily managed, with the help of acquaintances in the police, to obtain a passport for him with a fictitious surname and took him to Gelendzhik. And as if there are people who saw him there: he drank with the peasants in the park on a bench. And the peasants did not suspect that they were drinking with Stalin's son, and he did not give himself away by a word.

In reality, the KGB department for the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic conducted a thorough check of the circumstances of the death of Vasily Iosifovich, including a forensic medical examination. There is no reason to doubt that Vasily Stalin died a natural death. He died comparatively young because he had mismanaged his life. True, he is only partially to blame for this: he managed to be born in a family where no one was happy and could not give happiness to others.

Chief's daughter

Once Svetlana Stalin was envied by millions. People in dreams imagined her fantastically happy life. How far from reality they were!

She was only six years old when her mother, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, shot herself. But Svetlana will find out about what really happened to her mother many years later. She wrote about her father: "Mother's death hit him terribly, devastated him, took away his faith in people and in

friends... And he hardened."

After the fatal shot in the Kremlin, Svetlana herself found herself completely alone. The daughter of the leader was deprived of friends and girlfriends, the joys of communicating with people.

Svetlana's relationship with her father was very difficult. As a child, she was his favorite. Then something happened: either he was disappointed in the girl, or those around him were completely disgusted with him, but the daughter began to annoy him. She suffered and subconsciously searched for a man who would not only give her freedom, but would also be to some extent similar to her father. Isn't that why all Svetlana's marriages turned out to be unsuccessful and quickly broke up? None of her men brought her true happiness. But her men also had a hard time. The man she fell in love with first, spent ten years in places not so remote. A harsh price for one love date.

With the famous screenwriter Alexei Yakovlevich Kapler, whom the older generation still remembers as a wonderful host of the popular television program Kinopanorama, she was introduced by her brother. It was the November holidays. Kapler and Svetlana danced the then fashionable foxtrot. She so wanted to talk frankly with someone! And she met an adult and intelligent person who was ready to listen to her.

There was a difference of twenty-two years between them. According to his scripts, the popular films "Lenin in October", "Lenin in the eighteenth year", "Kotovskiy" were staged. Svetlana was still at school. Kapler came to her school, stood in the entrance of a neighboring house. I was afraid to approach. Employees of the 1st department of the NKVD, who were in charge of the protection of the leaders of the party and government, relentlessly followed the leader's daughter.

Kapler flew to Stalingrad. Once in Pravda, Svetlana Stalin read an article by a war correspondent Kapler, written in the form of letters from the front to the woman she loved. She knew right away that it was for her. The article ended with the words: "Now it is probably snowing in Moscow. From your window you can see the battlements of the Kremlin..."

She wasn't the only one who understood.

On December 14, 1942, the head of the propaganda and agitation department of the Central Committee, Georgy Fedorovich Aleksandrov, presented a memorandum to the secretaries of the Central Committee Andreev, Malenkov and Shcherbakov:

"In today's issue of the newspaper Pravda, an anti-artistic story by A. Kapler "Letters from Lieutenant L. from Stalingrad" was published. From beginning to end, the story is filled with stilted, formulaic words worn out like a worn penny coin.

The letter is addressed to his beloved girl, but the author of the story did not find a single bright word or image to convey Lieutenant L.'s feelings for his closest friend. Of the three hundred lines of the letter, one can read only two or three far-fetched and frivolous phrases about this ... Everything else in the letter is mediocre reasoning, borrowed from ordinary and stereotyped newspaper correspondence ...

On the whole, A. Kapler's story is anti-artistic.

The Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks considers it necessary to indicate the editorial board of Pravda that she made a mistake by publishing this story.

The draft resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on this matter is attached.

The next day, December 15, 1942, the secretariat of the Central Committee decided:

"The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks believes that the editors of the Pravda newspaper acted incorrectly by publishing A. Kapler's anti-artistic story "Letters from Lieutenant L. from Stalingrad", in which the characters and their relationship to each other are clearly untruthful and far-fetched."

Svetlana did not know that all her telephone conversations were tapped and recorded. The head of the Stalinist guard, General Vlasik, ordered Kapler to be warned that it would be better for him to leave Moscow. But he fell head over heels in love and did not heed the warning.

On March 3, 1943, Alexei Kapler, laureate of the Stalin Prize of the first degree, holder of the Order of Lenin, was arrested. He was accused of "keeping close contact with foreigners suspected of being spies." It was about foreigners.

cultures that came to the Soviet Union. Meetings with them were held by decision of the Central Committee and under the supervision of the Chekists.

On November 25, 1943, the Special Meeting decided: "Kaplera A.Ya. for anti-Soviet agitation to be imprisoned in a forced labor camp for a period of five years. He was sent to the North, to Vorkuta. He served five years and arrived in Moscow in 1948. It was a mistake. Probably, the Chekists were afraid that he would meet the leader's daughter again. He was arrested and given another five years in the camps.

The heavy, despotic character of Stalin did not allow him to come to terms with the fact that his daughter was already an adult and had the right to her own life, to love. But Svetlana's desire to break free from the Kremlin only intensified. As soon as she was eighteen years old, she married her brother's classmate, Grigory Morozov. She so wanted to find some kind of close person, at least someone who would love her and think about her ...

The father was dissatisfied with his son-in-law, a Jew, but muttered:

"Damn you, do whatever you want..."

He demanded that she never come to him with her husband. Only when she divorced did Stalin invite her to relax together in the summer. When Svetlana Stalin and Grigory Iosifovich Morozov separated, he was forbidden to see his son. When Svetlana unexpectedly returned to the Soviet Union in the 1980s, Morozov helped her. Yevgeny Maksimovich Primakov, who was friends with Morozov, believes that Svetlana was counting on the resumption of relations. But it was too late.

She again married a promising party worker, Yuri Zhdanov.

"Our marriage with Svetlana," Zhdanov said much later, "took place in April 1949. In those days, our family and Svetlana lived in the conditions of the Kremlin retreat. Svetlana was at my father's funeral. Then we began to meet at our apartment. I am at work from morning to evening, my mother is alone in the Kremlin prison. Svetlana shared her loneliness. Our meetings became more frequent, and the matter ended in marriage.

I planted Svetlana for writing out bibliographic cards from Marx, Lenin, Pavlov for my work. She did everything very carefully, some of the cards I keep to this day. But, apparently, he made a psychological mistake: Svetlana strove for her own literary work, strove for self-expression. I overlooked this, which was the reason for the loss of contact, and then the divorce.

Once in the family of the main party ideologist Zhdanov, Svetlana was shocked by the abundance of chests stuffed with "good", and in general a combination of ostentatious, sanctimonious "party spirit" with terry philistinism. For some reason, it is customary to admire the asceticism of the highest Soviet officials. This is an illusion, it's just that their life went on behind high fences, the Chekists reliably protected the "modest life" of the authorities from prying eyes.

In the autumn of fifty-second, the dynastic marriage fell apart.

Svetlana Alliluyeva wrote to her father:

"As for Yuri Andreevich Zhdanov, we decided to part with him. This was a completely natural conclusion, after we had been each other for almost half a year, neither husband nor wife, but no one knows who, after he quite clearly proved to me - not in words, but in deeds - that I was not at all dear to him and not needed, and after he repeated to me a second time that I should leave him a daughter.

No, I've had enough of this dried-up professor, a heartless "erudite", let him dig himself headlong into his books, but he doesn't need a family and a wife at all, they are completely replaced by numerous relatives. In a word, I don't regret at all that we parted, but I'm only sorry that a lot of good feelings were wasted on him, on this icy wall!

And Svetlana could not tell her father personally about such important events in her life, because the leader fenced himself off from everything and did not want to see her. She would later write bitterly about this: "When he answered me in an angry, irritated voice - "I'm busy" and threw

phone, then for a long time after that I could not gather my courage and call.

Even his daughter was not easy to call him. She dialed the number of the responsible security guard on duty at the "near" dacha. He answered: "there is movement" or "there is no movement yet", which meant that Stalin does not move around the room, that is, he sleeps or reads. If there is no movement, you should not call.

After the 20th Congress, Svetlana met with her cousin Ivan Alexandrovich Svanidze (nephew of Stalin's first wife), who had returned from exile in Kazakhstan. At birth, he was named Jonrid in honor of the American journalist who wrote the famous book about the October Revolution - "Ten Days That Shook the World." Svanidze lost his parents at the age of eleven - his father, Alexei Semenovitch, who believed that he and Stalin were not only relatives, but also close friends, were shot in 1938 - as a "German spy" (he worked as a trade representative in Germany), and his mother was an opera singer - and my sister was shot in 1941. Ivan Svanidze and Svetlana Alliluyeva agreed. But two tormented souls could not give peace and comfort to each other.

After the death of her father, the personal life of Svetlana Alliluyeva remained a subject of constant concern to the highest authorities. Especially from the moment she met a foreigner. The Indian communist Raji Bridge Singh lived in Moscow and worked as a translator at the Foreign Literature Publishing House. Their romance proceeded under the vigilant attention of operatives of the 7th KGB Directorate.

They did not dare to interfere with Svetlana, knowing her character. Followed relentlessly. But the KGB feared in vain that someone was trying to recruit Svetlana. She was a very independent person and, in spite of everything, she married an Indian. But again, she was out of luck. Her husband - he was much older than her - turned out to be a sick man. And he died in her arms. He bequeathed to bury him at home. Svetlana asked permission to perform it last will.

The Politburo did not want to let her go abroad, as if they had a premonition of something! But her late husband was a communist, India is more than a friendly country, and there was no reason to refuse. Svetlana was reluctantly released, however, accompanied by two Chekists. But they didn't follow.

On March 7, 1967, when Moscow was preparing to adequately celebrate the day of international women's solidarity, Stalin's daughter came to the American embassy in Delhi and asked for political asylum. She was taken to Italy, then to Switzerland, and from there they were already taken to the United States.

Having fled to the West, Svetlana Alliluyeva sat down at the book of memoirs "Twenty Letters to a Friend". She painted a portrait of her father, who saw enemies everywhere: "It was already a pathology, it was a persecution mania from devastation, from loneliness ... He was extremely fierce against the whole world."

Svetlana wrote not so much about her criminal father, but about her useless, stupid, double, useless and hopeless life, full of the most severe losses and the bitterest disappointments and losses. Proximity to power can give a person comfort, honors, ostentatious respect, but does not make a person happy. In the eighties, she returned to the USSR, but could not settle here and left her homeland again - this time forever.

Chekist games with poisons

On that March day, at the body of the leader, Vasily Stalin was the first to shout that his father killed. Stalin's children, Svetlana and Vasily, were brought to the "near" dacha on March 2.

Vasily was very drunk. He went to the security room, drank some more and shouted that "they killed his father." He wasn't the only one who thought so. "Doctors-pests" were arrested, but the leader was not saved. So they didn't take all of them?

The Ministry of State Security in those March days compiled reports on the mood in connection with Stalin's illness. Army sentiment report dated 5

March 1953, declassified.

"The same killer doctors are guilty of Comrade Stalin's serious illness. They gave comrade Stalin slow-acting poisonous drugs."

"Comrade Stalin has high blood pressure, and his enemies sent him to the south for treatment. This, apparently, was also done by doctors.

"Perhaps Comrade Stalin was also poisoned. A hard life has come, everyone is being poisoned, but the truth cannot be told. If Comrade Stalin does not recover, then we need to go to Israel and smash the Jews."

There were ominous rumors. Some claimed that Stalin had a heart attack, others that he was stricken with paralysis, and still others were sure that the leader had been poisoned.

Who could do it? Most often the name of Beria sounds. He felt that Stalin was preparing to eliminate him, and he got ahead of the leader. He removed all the people loyal to Stalin, in particular the head of security Vlasik, and surrounded the leader with his people. And at the right moment, Lavrenty Pavlovich ordered an employee of the security department of the Ministry of State Security to give Stalin an injection.

It was not difficult to pick up a deadly poison - in the toxicological special laboratory, which was part of the Ministry of State Security. Beria was just starting work in the NKVD when, at the end of 1938, the head of the special laboratory, Grigory Mairanovsky, turned to him: drugs must be tested on living people. How else can you guarantee the effectiveness of the weapons they create to destroy the enemies of Soviet power?

Beria ordered that those sentenced to death be handed over to inquisitive scientists. Knew that the special laboratory was created with the personal permission of Stalin.

Grigory Mairanovsky, together with his toxicologists, was taken to the state security apparatus in August 1937, even before Lavrenty Pavlovich came to Lubyanka, from the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine, founded before the revolution by Prince Alexander of Oldenburg, great-grandson of Emperor Paul the First.

While working in the NKVD, Mairanovsky defended his doctoral dissertation and became a professor. During the war, his laboratory was part of the 4th Directorate of the NKVD (terror and sabotage behind enemy lines), which was led by a man who went down in the history of special services - Pavel Anatolyevich Sudoplatov. After the war, the laboratory was subordinated to the department of operational equipment of the Ministry of State Security.

In addition to the toxicological laboratory, there was also a bacteriological laboratory - under the guidance of the famous microbiologist, Doctor of Biological Sciences Sergey Nikolayevich Muromtsev. When the murder of Trotsky was being prepared, an idea arose - to infect a book with the bacteria of tuberculosis or pneumonic plague and send it to the former chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the republic. Lev Davidovich will start reading the book and become infected. This was told during interrogation by the former head of the 4th special department, Major of State Security Mikhail Sergeevich Alekhin, to whom both laboratories were subordinate.

There were like two Muromtsevs. One is the director of the Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology named after N.F. Gamalei of the Academy of Medical Sciences, laureate of the Stalin Prize of the second degree, academician of the All-Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences, whom colleagues called "an outstanding scientist in the field of medical and veterinary microbiology." And the second, a colonel, until 1951 secretly worked in the bacteriological laboratory of the state security department. Under interrogation in 1954, he admitted that he had made eight "experiments". People were killed. No criminal proceedings were initiated against him.

The task was not only to kill, but also to hide the real cause of death. Professor Mairanovsky and his assistants tried all the methods. Poison was mixed into food. Did injections. Pricked with an umbrella and a cane, this method will subsequently be adopted. Sometimes people turned into guinea pigs were shot with poisoned bullets. Or they injected poison into the pillow so that the person died in his sleep.

In some cases, people died long and painfully. Sometimes the agony lasted two days. Grigory Mairanovsky said that the worst were those ten

people he poisoned with aconitine (a paralyzing herbal drug):

"I feel terrible when I remember this..."

The commandant of the Lubyanka, General Vasily Blokhin, said:

"I or the officers on duty were present when the prisoners brought in were put to death by the introduction of various poisons. But in all cases, when the killing had already been done, I came to complete the whole operation.

General Blokhin wrote down the names of the poisoned in a notebook, which he then burned. But one and a half hundred protocols on testing poisons on living people have been preserved ...

Work was going on on the first floor of the NKVD building in Varsanofevsky Lane or in the basement. Only Lieutenant General Sudoplatov and his assistant had access to the laboratory from the operational staff. Sometimes Sudoplatov himself asked to test this or that poison. The laboratory staff was explained that lethal drugs were needed for cordon operations. But poisons were also in demand at home. Permission to use the poison was given by Beria or his deputy Merkulov.

In addition, various narcotic substances were tested on the detainees for obtaining truthful testimony - they were looking for truth serum.

Mairanovsky was imprisoned in December 1951 in the Abakumov case.

In 1953, after the arrest of Beria, the colonel of the medical service and order bearer Mairanovsky testified during interrogation that, on the instructions of General Sudoplatov, he participated in the murder of people unknown to him in safe houses in Moscow. The poison was mixed with food or drink. If it did not work, they gave an injection. Mairanovsky proudly wrote: "More than a dozen sworn enemies of Soviet power were destroyed by my hand."

A few years later, the chairman of the KGB, Vladimir Semichastny, and the Prosecutor General of the USSR, Roman Rudenko, stated: "Mairanovsky tested potent poisons on living people, designed to carry out secret murders. With the knowledge of Beria and Merkulov, he carried out inhuman experiments on prisoners, as well as on persons who were specially abducted for this purpose on the street. At least 150 people were killed, many of whom, as it is now established, were repressed and died

innocent."

So they learned to kill people. The question is different: did Beria have access to these poisons in the fifty-third year? Were there people at his disposal who were ready to carry out such an order?

Lavrenty Pavlovich is perceived as a long-term leader of the Chekists. In reality, he was long removed from the state security department. Beria lost power over the Chekists. It was not he who selected the cadres of the Stalinist guards. It was not he who arrested the doctors who treated the leader. Lavrenty Pavlovich, even if he wanted to, had no practical opportunity to shorten Stalin's earthly term. So the assumption of Beria's involvement in the death of Stalin is nothing more than a myth.

But talk that the leader was killed continues. Most often, his ardent fans repeat this. Stalin's killer is being sought among his inner circle. In other words, they perceive the then leadership of the country - people whom Stalin himself elevated to the pinnacle of power - as a gang of criminals who hated each other and were capable of anything. This emotional perception is not far from the truth.

Stalin brought to the top of power and surrounded himself with people with a criminal warehouse mind, people whose hands are up to the elbows in blood. Such people will be treated with poison and will not raise an eyebrow ... But in fairness, we note that in the death of the leader on that March day of the fifty-third, there is neither their fault nor merit.

The leader's comrades-in-arms, who knew what Stalin was like in reality, realized that they were destined not for a personal pension, but for arrest and death. No one closest to him could be sure of his disposition. Stalin easily got rid of the most faithful servants. That is why in the March days of 1953, at the body of the leader, those whom he himself raised and nominated, could not hide their joy.

Even Molotov, who was considered the closest to the leader, whose parchment-yellow face did not leave the expression of constant alertness, as if every moment he was threatened by a death trap, relaxed after the death of the leader: fear disappeared. So for many of those who shed tears at Stalin's coffin, these were the first tears of joy in their lives.

Part three

Fatal power struggle

"Approve the actions of Comrade Beria"

When, in the first days of March 1953, the doctors made it clear that the leader was hopeless, his comrades-in-arms gathered and left for the Kremlin from the "near" dacha. They immediately went to Stalin's office. It was rumored that they were looking for some kind of black notebook, where another leader leaving for the world wrote down something important - either a political testament, or impartial assessments of his comrades-in-arms.

Stalin's will was not found. And there are serious doubts that it existed. The leader was not going to die. Or someone to transfer power. But his pupils did not need advice on how to divide the inheritance.

There is a lot of talk about who exactly Stalin saw as his successor. A variety of names are called. Then no one had any doubts about this. This was evidenced by the number of the party card of the presidium member, Secretary of the Central Committee and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Malenkov. He had ticket number three. The first was discharged to Lenin, the second to Stalin, the third to Georgy Maximilianovich. Malenkov was considered the closest person to Stalin and his rightful heir. Khrushchev got party card number four.

Two years after the death of the leader, Nikita Sergeevich spoke at the plenum of the Central Committee Communist Party of Ukraine. In his circle he shared his memories:

- Together with the doctors, we were on duty relentlessly at Stalin's bedside. I was on duty with Bulganin, Beria - with Malenkov, and Kaganovich - with Voroshilov ... The crisis came. Stalin is dead. Malenkov and Beria were upstairs. Bulganin and I were downstairs, at Stalin's bedside. We both jumped out and said that Stalin was dead.

Malenkov, in a gray tunic-sweatshirt - indifferent, tired, with gray bags under his eyes, entered the room that Stalin used as a dining room, and began to pace back and forth. Khrushchev assumed that Malenkov and Beria had already agreed on everything. But still came up:

- Stalin is dead, we should talk.
 - About what? Georgy Maksimilianovich specified.
 - How about what? About the guide. We need to think about how best to distribute the forces.
- Malenkov replied coldly:
- I don't want to talk about anything. The presidium will meet, and then we will talk.

It was clear to Khrushchev what the words of Georgy Maximilianovich meant. Everything has already been decided.

In reality, events developed somewhat differently. Doctors ascertained the death of Stalin when power had already been divided. But on March 4, Malenkov, in his neat handwriting, sketched out a list of the new composition of the government. They did it together with Beria. The list will then be found in the safe of Malenkov's assistant Sukhanov.

- Who nominated Malenkov for the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers? - Nikita Sergeevich told later. - Beria. It was not even sitting, but standing. Stalin's body was in the large dining room, and we were in the small dining room, where Beria nominated Malenkov for this post.

Nikita Sergeevich tried to rely on Bulganin, with whom he had developed close relations in the pre-war years. Khrushchev was a party leader

Moscow, Bulganin - economic. They lived in the same house, even on the same landing, were friends with families. Stalin always invited them together, with slight irony he called them "fathers of the city." With Bulganin, Nikita Sergeevich started an important conversation for both of them. In any case, this is how they told the plenum of the Central Committee, convened in July 1953, immediately after the arrest of Beria.

Khrushchev:

- It was probably a day before the death of Comrade Stalin. I then said to Comrade Bulganin: "Nikolai Alexandrovich, Stalin is hopelessly ill, he will die, what will happen after Stalin?"

And he spoke about the danger of Beria - he would want to seize the post of head of state security, this would allow him to "establish spying on members of the Politburo, eavesdrop, follow, create cases, intrigue."

Bulganin confirmed:

- There was such a conversation.

They were afraid of Beria. Theoretically, on the very day when the leader passed away, he could arrest them all and announce that Khrushchev, Kaganovich, Malenkov Molotov had killed Stalin ... And the people would have believed!

But Lavrenty Pavlovich was in no hurry.

The Big Four - Malenkov, Molotov, Beria and Khrushchev - shared power when Stalin was still alive and doctors even reported some improvement in his condition. But they understood: if Iosif Vissarionovich gets over it, then it is no longer possible to lead the country will be able.

March 5, 1953 at 8:40 pm in the Sverdlovsk Hall of the Kremlin opened a joint meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Arrived long before the appointed time. No one talked to anyone, everyone sat in silence. Stalin's death will come at 9:50, when the division of leadership chairs is over.

The meeting lasted exactly forty minutes. Those sitting in the hall listened with excitement to the words of the people to whom power had passed. Molotov and Mikoyan again took their place on the presidium. For them, the worst was behind them, noted the observant Konstantin Simonov, who, as a candidate member of the Central Committee, was present at the meeting: ... There was a feeling that right there, in the presidium, people were freed from something that was pressing on them, binding them. They were kind of swaddled, or something ... "

The secretary of the Central Committee and the Party Committee, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, first of all asked the Minister of Health Andrei Tretyakov for information. He spoke about the hopeless leader's condition.

Khrushchev explained:

- Members of the Bureau of the Presidium of the Central Committee are in turn at the bedside of Comrade Stalin. Comrade Bulganin is now on duty, so he is not present at the meeting.

Nikita Sergeevich gave the floor to Malenkov. Georgy Maximilianovich explained that Comrade Stalin was struggling with death, but his condition was so difficult that even if he defeated the approaching death, he would not be able to work for a very long time:

- Everyone understands the huge responsibility for the leadership of the country, which now falls on all of us. Everyone understands that the country cannot tolerate even a single hour of interruption in leadership.

After this preamble, Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, plump, with a puffy, flabby face, came to the podium and said that in the current situation, when Comrade Stalin was absent from the leadership of the party and the country, it was necessary now to appoint the head of government:

- We are sure that you will share our opinion that in the difficult time our party and country are going through, we can have only one candidate for the post of chairman

Council of Ministers, candidacy of Comrade Malenkov.

In the hall they shouted eagerly:

- Right! Approve!

Malenkov again took the podium and proposed to approve Beria, Molotov, Bulganin and Kaganovich as first deputies of the head of government. Then the rest of the positions were divided. Bulganin became Minister of War.

They reshuffled the entire top nomenclature. The number of members of the Presidium of the Central Committee was halved. Andrei Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky was taken out, he lost his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs and was sent as a permanent representative of the USSR to the UN. Molotov became Minister again. Aleksey Nikolaevich Kosygin, Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich Malyshev and Ivan Fedorovich Tevosyan lost their seats in the Presidium of the Central Committee and the post of Deputy Prime Minister, all three remained only ministers.

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Mikhailov (former head of the Komsomol), Panteleimon Kondratievich Ponomarenko (recent leader of Belarus), Nikolai Grigorievich Ignatov (he will take off again under Khrushchev, and then take part in his overthrow), Nikolai Mikhailovich Pegov (a year ago Stalin was just for him) ceased to be secretaries of the Central Committee instructed to be in charge of personnel in the apparatus of the Central Committee). The young Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev also lost his chair on Olympus. He was relieved of his duties as a candidate member of the presidium and secretary of the Central Committee "in connection with the transfer to work as the head of the political department of the naval ministry."

Nikolai Mikhailovich Shvernik, who headed the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, was transferred to the chair of the chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. Voroshilov was appointed the head of the Supreme Council (a post without power, but noticeable) - a marshal, a living legend, was needed by the new collective leadership of the country for solidity. The former chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, Vasily Vasilyevich Kuznetsov, was appointed ambassador to China.

Semyon Ignatiev ceased to be the Minister of State Security, which was merged with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. As compensation, he was elected secretary of the Central Committee for law enforcement agencies, but he will sit in this chair for only a month. An unexpected promotion was received by the first secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan, Mir-Jafar Abbasovich Bagirov - this was a friendly gift from Beria. Bagirov was a friend and colleague of Beria in the Azerbaijan Cheka. At first he helped Lavrenty Pavlovich, then he patronized him. Bagirov will very soon follow his old friend to the other world...

"It is known what kind of carousel began: to liquidate such a ministry, to merge such and such, and what we just didn't decide," Nikita Sergeevich later said. -

All messed up. They got to the point where they appointed Comrade Pegov, who was not even a deputy, the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

And in the empty "near" dacha at night, the body of the dead leader was carried out on a stretcher, put in a hearse and taken to the morgue. An autopsy was performed on March 6.

His results do not leave the slightest doubt about the causes of death: "The pathoanatomical study fully confirms the diagnosis made by the professors-doctors who treated I.V. Stalin. The data of the pathoanatomical study established the irreversible nature of I.V. Stalin since the onset of cerebral hemorrhage. Therefore, the vigorous treatment measures taken could not give a positive result and prevent a fatal outcome.

At the funeral on Monday morning, March 9, the Lubyanka delegation stood out on Red Square - members of the collegium of the ministry and the party committee walked with a wreath "I.V. Stalin from the staff of the state security of the country. First Deputy Minister of the Interior of the USSR Ivan Serov walked ahead of the procession. The generals carried on red cushions Stalin's awards, which he bestowed upon himself.

The car carried a gun carriage, on which stood a coffin covered with a glass cap. On the granite front panel, made for the mausoleum at the Dolgoprudny stone processing plant, there were already the words "Lenin - Stalin." High officials

issued personalized passes for entry to Red Square "for the funeral of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Generalissimo Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin."

Three people made speeches from the podium of the mausoleum - Malenkov, Beria and Molotov. It became clear that they are now the main ones.

"To my surprise," wrote Garrison Salisbury, already mentioned on the pages of this book, "Malenkov, a fat middle-aged man, turned out to be very attractive. He spoke excellent literary Russian and seemed to promise a new, more intelligent government. Beria was charmingly indulgent towards his companions.

People's Artist of Russia Valentin Iosifovich Gaft, who played Lavrenty Pavlovich very colorfully in one film, recalled:

- When Stalin was buried, I saw Beria on Red Square, and this made a very strong impression - Beria's speech and himself. Beria's face was almost covered, on top was a hat pulled down to the very eyebrows, the collar was turned up so that only the speaking mouth and pince-nez were visible. Then I thought he looked like a spy.

Molotov, it seems, was the only one of all those who spoke from the podium of the mausoleum, saying goodbye to the man whom, in spite of everything, he loved. Still, there was something that connected them. forever...

But the dead leader was of little interest to anyone. For the army of Soviet officials, the main problem was to understand the new power structure. The party apparatus had to first of all understand who was now the master in the country, whom to orientate itself to, whom to serve.

Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev was relieved of his duties as first secretary of the Moscow Party Committee so that he "focused on work in the Central Committee of the CPSU." But the power in those days belonged to others.

We proceeded from the fact that Malenkov would play the first role in the country and the party. He was in fact the right hand of Stalin. Without Georgy Maximilianovich, not a single case was decided - neither in the Central Committee, nor in the government. He let through all the papers, so the party apparatus and all the ministers depended on him. In 1952, at the XIX Congress, Malenkov made the main report.

He himself insisted that the country had a collective leadership. At the Presidium of the Central Committee, Malenkov expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that Pravda published his speech at the funeral meeting on the front page, and Beria and Molotov on the second:

- It should have been printed the same way. We had major abnormalities, a lot went along the lines of the cult of personality. And now we need to fix it right now. It would be wrong, say, to quote a speech at a mourning rally by just one person. Firstly, it is undeserved, and secondly, it is wrong. We consider it obligatory to stop the policy of the personality cult.

Malenkov reprimanded the editor-in-chief of Pravda, Shepilov, for the fact that his editorial craftsmen had mounted a photograph taken at the time of the signing of the Soviet-Chinese treaty in February 1950 in such a way that the new head of government, Malenkov, was next to Stalin and Mao Zedong.

Dmitry Trofimovich Shepilov decided to please the new master of the country. Overdone. Georgy Maximilianovich, in the presence of his comrades, defiantly scolded him for his helpfulness:

- The publication of such a picture without the knowledge of the Central Committee looks like a provocation. Such a shot didn't exist at all. This is a custom montage.

On March 12, 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee issued a severe reprimand to the editor-in-chief of Pravda for "arbitrarily typesetting the speeches of party and government leaders at a mourning meeting" and for publishing, without the knowledge of the Central Committee, "arbitrarily edited photograph on the third page."

On March 14, at the plenum of the Central Committee, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Malenkov, at his own request, was removed from the secretaries of the Central Committee. First big mistake. IN

As a result, party secretaries did not know whom to refer to, to whom to report, and felt insecure. Too complex solitaire in the Kremlin frightened and irritated them: they were used to certainty.

There were benevolent rumors about Malenkov. It was said that when he came to some meeting and he was greeted with the usual applause, he said:

- This is not the Bolshoi Theater, and I am not Kozlovsky.

"Malenkov was silent and did not speak out without need," Mikoyan recalled. - When Stalin said something, he - the only one - immediately took out a notebook from his jacket pocket and quickly wrote down "comrade Stalin's instructions." I personally disliked such sycophancy. Sitting at dinner, writing down - it was too deliberately.

But Malenkov was not a power maniac who thinks about it every minute of his life. Unlike real power-hungry, he found time for family life. He loved to read aloud to children. He equipped a real physics room for children in the country with a microscope, telescope, electric motors, magnets. He taught children music and French. The teaching was not wasted. Andrei Malenkov became a professor of biophysics, Georgy Malenkov Jr. defended his thesis in physical chemistry. Volya Malenkova taught composition at the Stroganov Art School.

"My parents were extremely attentive to my brothers and to me," Malenkova's daughter recalled. - Father and mother inspired us with an aversion to lies and all hypocrisy, to what is now called "elitist snobbery." They taught to judge people by their personal merits, regardless of social status or nationality. At the same time, no notations were read: fleeting remarks and personal example led us to the realization of our mistakes. There was no mention of religion, but - no doubt - all this fit into the gospel commandments ...

The behavior of Malenkov himself hardly corresponded to the gospel commandments. He married his daughter Volya to Vladimir Shamberg, the son of Mikhail Abramovich Shamberg, his old comrade and colleague. They have been friends since the days of joint studies at the Higher Technical School named after N.E. Bauman. Mikhail Shamberg was Malenkov's right hand in the Central Committee, and this is how he was perceived in the party apparatus. During the war years, Georgy Maksimilianovich made him head of the organizational and instructor department of the Central Committee.

The romance of Vladimir Shamberg and Volya Malenkova broke out in their youth, no one doubted that they would unite their destinies. They lived with the Malenkovs in their apartment on Granovsky Street (now Romanov Lane). Vladimir Shamberg entered the graduate school of the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

When the persecution of the Jews began, Malenkov made sure that his daughter's marriage to the young Shamberg was terminated with lightning speed. It happened in one day. Vladimir Shamberg told how he returned home and the maid handed him an envelope with a note from Volya. The wife informed her husband that they should separate. He tried to find her and talk, but she didn't want to. In complete confusion, he went to his parents.

Malenkov's guards brought his things. On January 12, 1949, the head of Malenkov's bodyguard took him to the Moscow city court, filed for a divorce, took his passport and issued a new one - without traces of registration of marriage with Malenkov's daughter. Love and friendship are nothing when it comes to a career and the location of a leader.

Why was Georgy Maximilianovich in such a hurry?

A week later, on January 18, the grandfather of Vladimir Shamberg (on the maternal side) - Solomon Abramovich Lozovsky, a member of the Central Committee, deputy minister of foreign affairs and head of the Soviet Information Bureau, was expelled from the party. At the end of January, Lozovsky was arrested. He will not be released - he will be shot along with other members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. On January 31, by decision of the secretariat of the Central Committee, Malenkov's former friend Mikhail Shamberg was expelled from the apparatus of the Central Committee and sent to Kostroma as deputy chairman of the regional executive committee.

Generally speaking, Malenkov owed his career to his wife. They met in 1920

year. He served as a political worker in the Red Army. Valeria Alekseevna Golubtsova worked as a librarian on a propaganda train. Formally, they did not register their marriage, and Valeria Alekseevna retained her maiden name. This meeting turned out to be a rare success for Malenkov. His wife became his friend and support. Endowed with a strong will and character, Valeria Alekseevna pushed the sluggish and inert Georgy Maximilianovich forward all her life.

The owner of excellent handwriting, Georgy Maximilianovich stood out for his enviable accuracy. He kept his papers in perfect order. He was polite, calm and correct. Was able to listen. He didn't speak unnecessarily.

Georgy Maximilianovich began under the leadership of Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, who the leader liked so much. Malenkov also prepared the arrest of Yezhov when he fell out of favor. The perfect performer. Having received instructions from Stalin, Malenkov broke any barriers, just to complete the task with lightning speed and report to the leader. In this role, he showed brilliant organizational skills, amazing efficiency and zeal. But, unsure of himself and malleable by nature, he was not capable of unexpected and independent actions.

He did not have enough will, strength, cunning to keep power. According to Shepilov, "Malenkov was devoid of any dictatorial features, and I got the impression that he was not an ambitious person. He was soft, pliable and felt the need to lean against some man with a strong will.

Malenkov relied on Beria.

On March 5, 1953, a decision was made to form a single Ministry of the Interior, uniting the Ministry of Internal Affairs itself and the former Ministry of State Security. Sergei Nikiforovich Kruglov, Bogdan Zakharovich Kobulov and Ivan Alexandrovich Serov were appointed Beria's first deputies.

Lavrenty Pavlovich made the new superministry his mainstay in the struggle for power. On the eve of Stalin's funeral, on Sunday, Beria convened his brigade, proven assistants with whom he had worked for many years in Moscow and Tbilisi - Merkulov, Mamulov, Ludwigov, Ordynstsev. Lavrenty Pavlovich was lively and businesslike. Asked to work on his speech; it took eight hours. Later, Pyotr Pospelov, who had just been elected secretary of the Central Committee, joined them.

A few months later, the former Minister of State Security Merkulov, who was arrested after Beria, will describe that day: "On the eve of the funeral of Comrade Stalin, Beria unexpectedly called me at the apartment (which he had not done for eight years), asked about his health and asked me to come to him in the Kremlin. It turns out that it was necessary to take part in editing Beria's already prepared speech at Comrade Stalin's funeral. I drew attention to the mood of Beria. Beria was cheerful, joking and laughing, seemed inspired by something That".

Beria's associates were definitely happy. The high position of Lavrenty Pavlovich opened bright prospects for them.

When in 1946 Stalin put Merkulov out of the Lubyanka, Beria lost interest in him. Never called. Vsevolod Nikolaevich tried to get an appointment with him, he wanted to ask for help. Lavrenty Pavlovich did not accept him.

Merkulov justified him retroactively:

- Lavrenty Pavlovich knows better. So it was necessary.

On March 11, Merkulov wrote to Beria:

"Dear Lawrence!

I want to offer you my services: if I can be useful to you anywhere in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, I ask you to dispose of me in the way you consider more appropriate. Position doesn't matter to me, you know that. In recent years I have learned something in terms of managing people and institutions, and I think now I will be able to work better than before. True, now I am semi-disabled (Merkulov suffered two heart attacks. - *Auth.*), But I hope that through

in a few months, in a maximum of six months, I will be able to work at full capacity, as usual. I will await your instructions."

Beria dispersed the party workers, who were brought to the Lubyanka by Semyon Ignatiev. Their cars were taken away, everyone was asked to vacate their offices.

Serafim Nikolaevich Lyalin, whom, from the post of second secretary of Tulsy the regional committee of the party was taken to the MTB as deputy head of the 2nd main department, he later said:

- Late at night called Beria. In his waiting room there are three or four people, like me, sent to the authorities from party work. Beria said rudely: "Well, assholes, you don't know the Chekist business. You need to find something better." And he announced who was going where. I was offered to go as deputy head of the department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the Gorky region ...

Nikolai Romanovich Mironov, secretary of the Kirovograd regional committee, was taken to the MGB as deputy head of military counterintelligence. Beria sent him as deputy head of the special department of the Kyiv military district - also a big downgrade.

Viktor Ivanovich Alidin, secretary of the Kherson regional committee, was appointed deputy head of the 7th department in the MGB. Beria sent him to department "P", which dealt with settlements, that is, exiles, starting with the kulaks.

All three will be patient and sit out Beria. Major General Mironov will become the head of the department of administrative bodies of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Lieutenant General Lyalin - head of the KGB department for Moscow and the Moscow region. He will be replaced in this post by Colonel-General Alidin.

Beria released from prison about half of the Chekists arrested under Ignatiev - those who he needed. He explained in his own way:

"Your business is rubbish. Stalin imprisoned you.

When the recently released head of the government security department, General Sergei Fedorovich Kuzmichev, was brought from the cell, Lavrenty Pavlovich asked:

- Do you know that Stalin died?
He didn't know. I cried.

"Come on," said Beria. "Stalin ordered you to be arrested.

Beria invited him to head the security department again. He refused, citing to illness, but Lavrenty Pavlovich convinced him.

Beria chose a newcomer, Nikolai Stepanovich Zakharov, who led the regional department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Kemerovo, as the heads of the most important 1st department (protection of the country's top leadership - members of the presidium and candidates for members of the presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU, as well as secretaries of the Central Committee).

Zakharov was ordered to hand over his affairs to his deputy and urgently arrive in Moscow. Honestly admitted to General Kuzmichev that he did not know the new service.

"If you work, you will find out," the head of the security department answered.

The Chekists greeted the return of Beria with mixed feelings. Since 1945, when he left the Lubyanka, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge. There are not many of his nominees left. Personnel shake-up and the merger of the two ministries have created discontent.

Beria attached trusted cadres who started with him back in the GPU of Georgia. Colonel Konstantin Sergeevich Savitsky was approved as an assistant to the First Deputy Minister Kobulov. Colonel Georgy Iovich Paramonov - Deputy Head of the Investigation Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Particularly Important Cases. Lieutenant General Shalva Otarovich Tsereteli was sent to Tbilisi as Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia and Head of the Border Troops of the Georgian District. Released from prison, Lieutenant-General Avksenty Narikiyevich Rapava received the post of Minister of State Control of Georgia.

At one time, the Ministry of Armed Forces informed the Ministry of State Security that his brother, Colonel Kapiton Rapava, the head of the chemical service of one of the armies, went over to the side of the Germans during the war. Brother is a traitor! This was enough for immediate dismissal

from organs. The then Minister of State Security Merkulov simply sent the paper to Auxenti Rapava himself: we do not offend our own ...

Lavrenty Pavlovich also sent Vladimir Dekanozov to Tbilisi - Minister of Internal Affairs, and Stepan Mamulov - head of the department of party, trade union and Komsomol bodies of the republican Central Committee. I didn't want any more surprises in my native republic.

After the arrest of Beria, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Georgia Valerian Minaevich Bakradze at the plenum of the Central Committee complained about his personnel policy:

- They obviously do not trust us, they sent controllers in the form of the Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Dekanozov, and to the party apparatus, the head of the department of the Central Committee - Mamulov. We did not understand the appointment of Mamulov and Dekanozov with their introduction to the bureau of the Central Committee, and Beria summoned me and offered to discuss all issues only in the presence of Dekanozov and Mamulov.

Bakradze was dissatisfied with the way Beria spoke to him:

"Suddenly the phone rings. Beria says: you held the plenum incorrectly, you you don't understand, you're a canner, not a politician.

There was laughter in the hall. Bakradze offensively explained:

- I worked as the Minister of Food Industry of Georgia for five years.

Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria had big plans. He, as another member of the Politburo later put it, really wanted to work.

The rest of the country's leaders found it difficult to get used to the new role. They were so accustomed to following Stalin's orders that many became paralyzed. And Beria had no doubts: he would cope with any task. He began to act independently and self-confidently. He has all the levers of control in his hands, the state security apparatus is omnipotent, and no one dared to ask: why on earth are you doing this?

Valeria Anatolyevna Gerasimova, Fadeev's first wife and cousin of the film director Sergei Apollinariyevich Gerasimov, described with disgust the mourning meeting in the Writers' Union after Stalin's funeral on March 10, 1953:

"Simonov said that from now on, the most important great task of Soviet literature will be to recreate the image of the greatest man ("of all times and peoples" - the approved formulation of those years).

Nikolai Gribachev spoke in his own image: flashing his cold white eyes with warning, he said that after the disappearance of the great leader, vigilance should not only not be weakened, but, on the contrary, should increase. If one of the enemy elements tries to use the circumstances for his work, let him not hope that the steel hand of justice has weakened ...

Terrible meeting. The great "humanist" was no more. But the fear seemed to have reached its climax. I remember green, as if ill, all faces, distorted, with some kind of unseeing eyes; muffled rustling, not human speech on the sidelines; sometimes, however, demonstrated (and in some of them true!) sobs and the so-called "muffled sobs." A universal paroxysm of fear.

The ideological cadres acted according to the old schemes. The country did not yet suspect what rapid changes await her.

Beria pulled his assistant Sharia out of prison. By his order, in general, everyone who was planted in the "Mingrelian case" was released. But they arrested Colonel Tsepkov, who sent them to jail (he led the investigation into this case). After the arrest of Beria, he will be released ...

Pyotr Afanasyevich Sharia recalled: "On March 26, I was summoned to the Kremlin to Beria and was received by him in the presence of Ordyn'tsev and Ludwigov. Beria instructed me to help Ludwigov in drawing up a note to the Central Committee on the doctors' case. A few days later he summoned me and Lyudvigov to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where Kobulov and Vlodzimirsky were staying with him. There, Ludwigov and I were instructed to draw up a report to the Central Committee of the CPSU on the case of the so-called Mingrelian

nationalists. When the work came to an end and the documents were approved, Beria asked where I prefer to be his assistant - in the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the Council of Ministers.

Just think - Kobulov and Vlodizimirsky, whose hands are up to the elbows in blood, are busy exposing the crimes of their fellow Chekists! And they imprisoned those whom they themselves taught to torture and torture!

Beria was not driven by the desire to restore justice and free the innocent, not by the desire to stop the criminal practice of the Chekist apparatus. He needed something else - to remove those whom he did not like. And of course, create a reputation as a people's intercessor. He acted at a distance.

Beria formed four special groups within the Ministry of Internal Affairs: to check the "doctors' case", the "Mingrelian case", the cases of MGB employees accused of creating a counter-revolutionary Zionist organization, and the cases of arrested employees of the Main Artillery Directorate of the USSR Military Ministry. I gave them two weeks to work. And then he also appointed a commission to check whether the leadership of the air force and employees of the Ministry of Aviation Industry were fairly imprisoned.

All groups reported that the cases were falsified.

Beria began the rehabilitation of military leaders planted after the war. The order he signed said: the investigation was carried out by the former Main Directorate of Counterintelligence Smersh biased and superficial.

They released those arrested in February 1952, the Deputy Minister of War, Marshal of Artillery Nikolai Dmitrievich Yakovlev, the head of the Main Artillery Directorate, Colonel General Ivan Ivanovich Volkotrubenko, and the Deputy Minister of Armaments, Major General Illarion Avetovich Mirzakhanov. Beria released the former commander of the air force, Chief Marshal of Aviation Alexander Alexandrovich Novikov and the former people's commissar of the aviation industry Alexei Ivanovich Shakhurin.

Already after the arrest of Beria, on July 13, 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee decides to stop the cases and completely rehabilitate most of the generals, admirals and members of their families arrested under Stalin. A number of generals will have their sentence reduced to the term actually served and released from custody. 63 generals and admirals were rehabilitated and released that day. How many Soviet military leaders Stalin innocently kept behind bars!

On July 11, 1953, Minister of Defense Marshal Nikolai Alexandrovich Bulganin, Prosecutor General of the USSR Roman Andreevich Rudenko and Chairman of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR Lieutenant General of Justice Alexander Alexandrovich Cheptsov reported to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU:

"When checking, it was revealed that in total, in the period from 1941 to 1952, 101 generals and admirals were arrested. Of these, convicted by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR - 76 generals and admirals and 5 people - by a special meeting at the former MGB of the USSR. 8 generals were released from custody for lack of corpus delicti, and 12 generals died while under investigation ...

Despite the fact that the arrested were under investigation for up to 10 years or more, no facts were collected to justify or extenuate their guilt. Illegal methods of investigation were used against individual detainees in order to force them to confess their guilt in "crimes" or to obtain from them slanderous testimonies against other persons."

Beria took care of the fate of Molotov's wife, so that Vyacheslav Mikhailovich owed her release to him. Polina Semyonovna was taken to Moscow. On March 21, Malenkov and Beria, on behalf of the Presidium of the Central Committee, canceled the decision of the party collegium of the Party Control Committee to expel Zhemchuzhina from the party and returned her party card. On March 23, the investigative unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs closed the case against Zhemchuzhina. A day later, the Special Meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs completely rehabilitated her. Polina Semyonovna was fifty-six years old. She did not return to work, in April she received a personal pension.

On April 1, Beria informed his comrades on the Presidium of the Central Committee that the "case of doctors" - "from beginning to end is a provocative fiction of the former Deputy Minister of State Security Ryumin." He suggested: immediately release all those arrested from custody, bring the former employees of the MGB who fabricated this case to criminal responsibility and "consider the issue of responsibility of the former Minister of State Security of the USSR Comrade Ignatiev S.D."

On April 2, Beria sent a note to the Central Committee about the real circumstances of the murder of the artistic director of the State Jewish Theater, People's Artist of the USSR Solomon Mikhailovich Mikhoels. The investigation was not difficult. Frightened to death, the participants in the murder laid out everything at the very first interrogation. They justified themselves: it was a personal order from Comrade Stalin! ..

On April 3, the Presidium of the Central Committee rehabilitated those arrested in the case of "killer doctors". Lavrenty Pavlovich ordered them to be released immediately. Received in my office:

- The commission has sorted out your case. This is the work of the enemies of the people, now exposed. You have been rehabilitated and will be taken home.

This happened on the night of the third to the fourth of April. None of the doctors even knew that Stalin had died.

The Presidium of the Central Committee decided:

"Offer the former Minister of State Security of the USSR Comrade Ignatiev S.D. submit to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU an explanation of the grossest perversions of Soviet laws and falsification of investigative materials committed by the Ministry of State Security. In view of the admission of serious mistakes in the leadership of the former Ministry of State Security of the USSR, it is impossible to recognize the abandonment of Ignatiev S.D. as Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

But that was only the beginning.

On April 4, Beria signed an order for the ministry "On the prohibition of the use of arrested by any measures of coercion and physical influence":

"It has been established that in the investigative work of the MGB bodies there were gross distortions of Soviet laws, the arrests of innocent Soviet citizens, the unbridled falsification of investigative materials, the widespread use of various methods of torture - severe beatings of those arrested, round-the-clock use of handcuffs on hands turned behind their backs, which continued in some cases in for several months, prolonged sleep deprivation, confinement of those arrested in a naked state in a cold punishment cell.

At the direction of the leadership of the former Ministry of State Security of the USSR, the beatings of the arrested were carried out in premises equipped for this purpose in the Lefortovo and internal prisons and were entrusted to a special group of specially designated persons from among the prison workers using all kinds of instruments of torture. Such savage "interrogation methods" led to the fact that many of the innocently arrested were brought by investigators to a state of decline in physical strength, moral depression, and some of them to the loss of human appearance.

Taking advantage of such a state of the arrested, the falsifying investigators slipped them fabricated "confessions" in advance about anti-Soviet and espionage-terrorist work.

Beria banned torture in the state security agencies. Revolution! But only recent cases, to which Lavrenty Pavlovich had nothing to do, were reviewed. He did not mention other unjustly arrested people.

The report of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the rehabilitation of "killer doctors", published by Pravda on April 4, 1953, made a huge impression on the country. The first public recognition that the state security agencies commit crimes. The tension in the society was relieved. The gloomy atmosphere that had thickened in the last months of Stalin's life dissipated. It was in those days that the sprouts of what later, using the name of the famous story of Ilya

Grigoryevich Ehrenburg, will be called the "thaw".

After Beria's arrest, these newspaper reports will be blamed by his comrades in the party leadership: the doctors' case was stopped, but why write about it, undermine the authority of the party and organs? At the plenum of the Central Committee after the arrest of Beria, the new secretary of the Central Committee, Nikolai Nikolayevich Shatalin, will say this:

- Take the well-known question about doctors. As it turned out, they were arrested incorrectly. It is absolutely clear that they need to be released, rehabilitated, and let them work for themselves. No, this treacherous adventurer managed to get the publication of a special communiqué from the Ministry of the Interior, this question was in every way inclined in our press, and so on ... The mistake was corrected by methods that brought considerable harm to the interests of our state. The responses abroad were also not in our favor.

The revelations were extremely dissatisfied with the state security officers. They are not they understood: what should they do now if political affairs stop? ..

But so far, everything is moving fast. Lavrenty Pavlovich is active, energetic and assertive. Comrades in the leadership blink their eyes and obediently vote for Beria's proposals. They dare not object or challenge his ideas.

The exposure of crimes leads to the search for the perpetrators.

On April 6, Pravda ran an editorial entitled "Soviet socialist legality is inviolable." The name of the former Deputy Minister of State Security, Colonel Ryumin, was named: "Contemptible adventurers like Ryumin tried to inflame in Soviet society with a fabricated or investigative case ... feelings of national enmity deeply alien to the socialist ideology. For these provocative purposes, they did not stop at the rabid slander of the Soviet people. A thorough check established, for example, that an honest public figure, People's Artist of the USSR Mikhoels was slandered in this way.

On April 7, Pravda reported that Ignatiev was no longer Secretary of the Central Committee.

The ideological apparatus, sensitive to changes, understood the changed moods of the upper classes correctly: the attacks on the "cosmopolitans" ceased at once. There was talk about the benefits of creative discussions. Mikhail Zoshchenko was again accepted into the Writers' Union.

To think that everyone hated Beria is wrong. When the "killer doctors" were released, one of the creators of the atomic and hydrogen bomb, Academician Yakov Borisovich Zel'dovich, three times Hero of Socialist Labor, said not without pride to another three times Hero, Academician Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov:

- But this is our Lavrenty Pavlovich figured it out!

Such sentiments arose among those who worked with him on the atomic project:
"Lavrenty Pavlovich - defender and support."

"When he needed it," Merkulov recalled, "he could show himself to be a good comrade, attentive and sensitive. Beria tried to do this in relation to his inner circle, realizing that his own fate depended on how his entourage would work.

Beria cared about his subordinates. Gave them apartments - one of the highest values that time. Did not regret awards.

The manager of the affairs of the Council of Ministers, Mikhail Trofimovich Pomaznev, subsequently reported to the Central Committee of the CPSU that Beria was unnecessarily patronizing his subordinates from the Special Committee No. 1 (atomic project) under the Council of Ministers of the USSR:

"Most of the ministers of defense industry and mechanical engineering received several orders and became laureates of the Stalin Prize. Many awards were given to builders. The apparatus of the Special Committee was excessively marked with awards. Secretary of the Special Committee Makhnev became a Hero of Socialist Labor, twice a laureate of the Stalin Prize and received several orders.

After the arrest of Beria, Vasily Alekseevich Makhnev himself hastened to disown his patron, to whom he also owed general epaulettes: "The problem of atomic

Our country succeeded in solving weapons only thanks to the fact that the Central Committee and the government provided unlimited resources of money, materials for this (created conditions that prevailed over all other needs of the national economy), put the best forces of science, technology, hundreds of thousands of workers, military men in the service of this goal. builders and prisoners. At the cost of enormous expenditure of resources and efforts of our people, we have solved the atomic problem. Beria was only an exploiter (in the literal sense) of all these means and forces, and he attributed the profit (success) to himself.

On April 28, Ignatiev was removed from the Central Committee of the CPSU. The Party Control Committee was ordered to consider his case. This meant that the former minister would have to answer for all the affairs of the late Stalinist period.

On June 25, Lavrenty Pavlovich sent Malenkov a copy of the testimony of Ryumin, Ignatiev's former deputy for the investigation. "Ryumin," Beria's accompanying note said, "with the knowledge and approval of Ignatiev, introduced a widespread practice of applying physical measures to unreasonably arrested citizens and falsifying investigative materials."

Beria would have planted Ignatiev, but did not have time. The next day, June 26, he himself arrested...

But for now, Lavrenty Pavlovich is on horseback. The Presidium of the Central Committee decided: "To approve the actions carried out by Comrade Beria L.P. measures to uncover criminal acts committed over a number of years in the former Ministry of State Security of the USSR.

Voroshilov amnesty

On May 1, 1953, the Minister of Defense, Marshal Bulganin, made a speech while taking the parade. He mentioned three leaders of the country:

– The great Soviet people, having rallied even more closely around their native Communist Party and its Central Committee, around their government, are confidently advancing along the path of building communism. The recent statements of comrades Malenkov, Beria and Molotov clearly express the policy of the Soviet government... The central state apparatus has been reorganized, which will improve the management of the national economy. An amnesty decree was adopted. Measures are being worked out to further strengthen socialist legality. Along with a large reduction in food prices, prices for industrial consumer goods have been significantly reduced ... Comrades! We Soviet people look to the future with confidence.

Real power, in essence, was concentrated in the hands of Beria. But it was power without glory. He knew how he was treated in the country. Is the owner of the Lubyanka the head of state? People were not ready for this. He longed for popularity among the people. Here Lavrenty Pavlovich won it.

In these few months of 1953, Beria subjugated everything he could. Even the administration of the authorized Council of Ministers for the protection of military and state secrets in the press (censorship) and it is not clear why the Main Directorate of Geodesy and Cartography.

But he freed the Ministry of Internal Affairs from production and economic activities. He handed out construction departments and industrial enterprises to the sectoral ministries, which used the labor of prisoners. He was tired of business affairs. He wanted to be
politician.

Prisoners held in forced labor camps, as well as employees of the camp apparatus and paramilitary guards, that is, the entire Main Directorate of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies (GULAG) and the department of children's colonies, he gave to the Ministry of Justice. He abandoned everything except special camps and prisons for especially dangerous state criminals (spies, saboteurs, terrorists, Trotskyists, Social Revolutionaries and nationalists) and war criminals from among former prisoners of war (Germans and Japanese).

Beria prepared the 1953 amnesty. This amnesty is perceived extremely negatively. In fact, she opened the way to freedom for people who were imprisoned for crimes for which they were no longer imprisoned.

The amnesty was not at all a manifestation of his good will. The first prisoner riots broke out in March 1946. After the war, historian Alexander Yulievich Daniel notes, the population of the Gulag changed. There appeared former front-line soldiers, Vlasov, Bandera. They were able to resist both camp criminals and guards. Chekists jailed a lot of young people, students who really hated the regime. That is why, from the end of the 1940s, uprisings began in the camps. After the death of the leader, their number increased dramatically.

And next to the camps lived yesterday's prisoners, recently released - either they were not allowed to return home, or they met a woman, got married and settled down. There was a critical mass, dangerous for the authorities. In fact, all major industrial cities were surrounded by prison camps and ex-prisoners, without which the industry could not do. If they had risen, they would have crushed any power.

This was one of the reasons for the release of prisoners.

On March 26, Beria wrote to the Presidium of the Central Committee that two and a half million people were sitting in labor camps, prisons and colonies. A large number of prisoners does not pose a serious danger to society: women, teenagers, the elderly and sick people. There are 400,000 women behind bars, of which 6,000 are pregnant and 35,000 with children under the age of two.

Even for minor crimes, they were forced to serve a full term, because the decree of June 15, 1939 banned early release for good work. At a closed meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Stalin said:

"We are doing a bad job of disrupting the work of the camps. Of course, these people need to be released, but from the point of view of the state economy, this is bad ... Is it possible for these people to remain at work - to give them awards, orders, maybe? Make them free ahead of schedule, but so that they remain at the construction site as civilian employees ... This, as we said, is a voluntary-compulsory loan, and here it is also a voluntary-compulsory abandonment.

Since 1940, factory directors were given five to eight years for poor-quality products. On February 15, 1942, they adopted a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the criminal punishment of collective farmers who did not work out the established number of workdays. 30,000 were sentenced to terms of five to ten years for malfeasance and economic crimes - they were mainly chairmen of collective farms and foremen, engineers, and heads of enterprises.

Beria offered to release about a million people. Those who received a sentence of more than five years, convicted of counter-revolutionary crimes, banditry, large-scale theft and premeditated murder were not subject to amnesty. He proposed to revise the legislation in parallel, to mitigate criminal liability for minor crimes, and to punish economic, domestic and official violations by administrative measures.

On March 28, the decree "On Amnesty" was published. 120 thousand prisoners were released. Investigations on 400 thousand people were stopped. The amnesty was called the Voroshilov amnesty - the decree was signed by the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council, Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov.

On March 27, Beria sent a note to the Council of Ministers with a proposal to abandon expensive construction projects that absorb funds from the budget. Beria, as first deputy head of government, refused to increase military spending. Reproached the generals:

You are spending too much money.

After Stalin's death, the need for a powerful military fist in the Far East disappeared. The 14th Army was disbanded by the directive of the General Staff on April 23, 1953. 5th and 7th th fleets were united into a single Pacific Fleet.

In the course attributed to the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill complimentary phrase about Stalin: "He took Russia with a plow, and left with an atomic bomb." Churchill did not say these words. Anyone who speaks English can study his writings and see for himself. And the compliment, if you think about it, is dubious. He took the country with a plow, with a plow, it turns out, and left ...

In reality, Stalin "adopted the country" during the heyday of the New Economic Policy, when she not only fed herself, but also exported bread. But he left half-starved, with a destroyed village and a robbed peasantry. In terms of food consumption per capita, the country remained at the pre-revolutionary level. When at the plenum of the Central Committee, Mikhail Andreevich Suslov announced the miserable figures for grain production in 1953, the hall flashed:

- They brought it to the handle, there was nothing left.

The hostess of Moscow, Ekaterina Furtseva, recalled from the podium of the plenum:

- Even in the capital, until recently, bread was sold in one hand no more than a kilogram. In Moscow, which is in special conditions, bread was sold with an admixture of about forty percent of potatoes and other things.

Lazar Kaganovich, who visited the Urals, told his comrades:

- There are wonderful factories, and the workers live in semi-dugouts. The barracks are falling apart.

Of course, the food issue is acute: there is not enough meat, there is not enough sausage.

Anastas Mikoyan justified himself:

- We have a meat supply crisis, to put it in a harsh word - an acute shortage of meat and animal oil. Comrade Stalin was informed that we did not have enough meat. He says: why not enough? It is bad with animal husbandry... We sell meat only in Moscow, Leningrad, with a sin in half in the Donbass and the Urals. Or take a herring. There are fewer herrings for sale than under the tsar. We press, we press, but the fishing industry no longer gives ...

Anastas Mikoyan later complained about Beria:

- The Indians turned to us so that we would give them a certain amount of grain - about 300 thousand tons. The Indians are playing between us and the Americans. The Presidium of the Central Committee said: it would be good not to refuse the Indians in order to reduce the influence of the Americans. Molotov and I found grain - from export resources, through the sale to other capitalist countries to sell to the Indians. And Beria says: you can't do this. I say: this is within the limits of the export fund. And he: maybe then reduce exports?

Beria logically believed that if there is not enough grain, there are queues for flour, then how can you sell bread abroad?

Malenkov and Beria wanted to ease the burden of the peasant, to decentralize the management of the economy. They focused on the production of consumer goods, for which Malenkov would later be severely criticized. On April 1, newspapers published a long, full-page list of items that had been slashed.

At the initiative of Beria, on May 9, the Presidium of the Central Committee adopted a sensational, albeit secret, resolution "On the design of columns of demonstrators and buildings of enterprises, institutions, organizations on public holidays." It forbade the display of portraits of leaders, both deceased and living, at demonstrations. After the arrest of Beria, the Presidium of the Central Committee will come to his senses and cancel this unprecedented decision. How is it that Soviet people will go to a demonstration without portraits of members of the presidium? ..

Beria, determined to lead absolutely everything, took up international affairs.

At 2:00 am on March 4, 1953, the telephone rang at the home of the Director of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, Allen Dulles. The phone was picked up by his daughter. The officer on duty asked her to wake her father, who was fast asleep after a reception at the French embassy. When Dulles picked up the receiver, they read a telegram from Moscow to him - Stalin had a stroke, the leader was unconscious, paralyzed and dying.

Allen relayed the startling news to his older brother, United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Leading Kremlinologists Gathered: What to Expect? Who will take power in Moscow? Who will take Stalin's place?

On March 16, two weeks after the leader passed away, Malenkov called on the West to negotiate:

- At present, there are no such complicated or unresolved issues that could not be resolved by peaceful means on the basis of mutual agreement between the countries concerned. This applies to our relations with all states, including the United States of America.

A month later, on April 16, speaking to the publishers' association, American President Dwight Eisenhower replied that normalization of relations with the USSR was quite possible. His speech was reprinted by Pravda and Izvestia. But, sending a new ambassador to Moscow, Eisenhower admonished him:

"Make sure you don't get poisoned or caught out there."

Ambassador Charles Bohlen flew to Moscow depressed and frightened. But he saw that The Kremlin's foreign policy line is changing.

Negotiations began on a truce in Korea, where the war had been going on for three years. On July 27, an armistice agreement was signed in Phanmunjon.

Beria tried to restore relations with Yugoslavia, severed under Stalin. He instructed the scouts to arrange a confidential meeting for him with Alexander Rankovich, who held the same positions in Belgrade as he did. Rankovič was a member of the Politburo, Deputy Head of Government and Minister of the Interior. But they did not have time to meet.

Lieutenant General Amayak Zakharovich Kobulov, the younger brother of Beria's first deputy, spoke in the spring of 1953 to one of his subordinates:

"You can't even imagine what Lavrenty Pavlovich planned. It will decisively break the existing order, not only in our country, but also in the countries of people's democracy.

In the summer of 1953, the situation in East Germany worsened. The inept policy of its leaders, the low standard of living compared to West Germany, led to a popular uprising on June 17th. It was crushed by Soviet tanks. But doubts arose about the correctness of the course for accelerated construction in East Germany.

socialism.

It is generally accepted that Beria wanted to liquidate the German Democratic Republic, he is quoted as saying:

- There is no need to engage in the construction of socialism in the GDR, it is necessary that the Western and East Germany united into a bourgeois, peace-loving state.

True, in the notes of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the GDR, Otto Grotewohl, who flew to Moscow, his words sound different: "Beria says: we are all to blame, no one blames anyone, but the East Germans must quickly fix everything."

Lavrenty Pavlovich tried to continue the dual Stalinist line in the German question. Moscow wanted to influence the whole of Germany, but at the same time not to lose control over the GDR. And the first task seemed to Stalin strategically more important. In other words, it is more profitable to have the whole of Germany neutral (that is, outside NATO) than half of Germany is socialist.

Beria drew up an action plan entitled "On measures to improve the political situation in the GDR." The leaders of East Germany were required to change course: "To recognize as wrong the course towards the accelerated construction of socialism in the GDR." Stop artificially planting agricultural cooperatives. Do not stifle medium and small private capital. Emphasize the development of light industry rather than heavy industry. Stop the violent struggle with the church.

"If we don't correct the situation now," Malenkov became worried, "there will come catastrophe. We need to act quickly.

But in Moscow, opinions were divided. The dogmatist Foreign Minister Molotov sharply objected to Beria. The dispute was decided in favor of Molotov, because on June 26 Beria lost and

power, and freedom.

In April and May, he summoned many members of the foreign intelligence residencies to Moscow to test their qualifications and assign new tasks to them. Six hundred people, Malenkov would specify later. Beria ordered many to be replaced. Explained:

- The information they sent was, at best, a repetition of the Tassov information. They don't have any agents.

The heads of the representative offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the countries of people's democracy were given an exam on knowledge of the language of the host country. Who passed, came back, albeit with a demotion. Those who failed were placed in the reserve. And not everyone knew the language - used to working with an interpreter. Beria insisted that the advisers not intervene in internal squabbles and not give recommendations on the "slippery" cases that arose as a result of the struggle in the ruling elite, so that no one would be tempted to claim that the Soviet comrades were on his side.

Beria intended to lead absolutely everything in the country. He instructed Grigory Alekseevich Ordynstev, who was in charge of his secretariat in the Council of Ministers, to select assistants for him on issues of agriculture and industry, and also to find a qualified economist who would deal with the problems of the countries of people's democracy.

Assistants instructed:

- You are called upon to follow your industry, to study it - in order to help me, on the basis of analysis, raise problematic issues in the government. Obtain relevant data, materials and literature. If you need any data, so that they are at hand.

International affairs were entrusted to Petr Afanasyevich Sharim (professor and former deputy head of foreign intelligence), internal political affairs - to Boris Alexandrovich Ludvigov, who back in 1936 became his assistant in the Transcaucasian regional committee, then headed a special sector in the Central Committee of Georgia.

Beria liked him as an efficient and reliable apparatchik. In 1938, already in Moscow, Beria appointed him deputy head of the NKVD secretariat, then took him as an assistant in the government. Chekists built a case against Ludvigov, but Beria did not authorize his arrest. At the end of April 1941, Beria brought Kobulov and Ludvigov to his home on Malaya Nikitskaya for dinner. Kobulov drank and in a friendly way shared with Ludvigov:

- And we wanted to arrest you in 1937, but Lavrenty Pavlovich did not allow it. Ludvigov was devoted to Beria, conducted his personal and financial affairs. Said: "I am ready to fulfill any of his tasks. I bow to Beria, I am in his honor named his son Lawrence.

In 1953, Beria appointed him head of the secretariat of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, ordered him to walk around departments of the ministry, to study people:
You don't know new ones.

Beria said that there should not be two masters in the country - two authorities: party and Soviet. The head of the Hungarian party and government, Matyas Rakosi, arrived in Moscow and politely addressed the Soviet comrades:

- I ask for advice on what issues should be resolved in the Council of Ministers, and which in the Central Committee?

Beria said dismissively:

- What is the Central Committee? Let the Council of Ministers decide everything, and let the Central Committee deal with personnel and propaganda.

On May 8, the Pravdinskaya editorial "Improve the work of the state apparatus" said: "Party committees replace and depersonalize Soviet bodies, work for them ... They take on administrative and administrative functions that are unusual for them." Everyone noticed the unusual front line.

Lavrenty Pavlovich did not hide his contempt for the party secretaries:

- Put at least an empty bottle for the post of secretary of the party committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, this is not will make no difference.

If he called one of the workers of the apparatus, and he was sitting at a party meeting, scolded:

- Loafer, loafer!

The employees of the department of administrative bodies of the Central Committee, which was in charge of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, did not risk disturbing their wards once again, because Beria did not like it. He spoke to Khrushchev:

- Your employee of the administrative department called Kobulov and asked him how things were going. This is impossible! I am a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee, and someone calls my first deputy.

The first secretary of the Leningrad regional committee, Vasily Mikhailovich Andrianov, expressed dissatisfaction with the change of head of the regional department of internal affairs to Beria. Until recently, Andrianov was a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee and felt confident. But, according to Mamulov, who was present at the conversation, Beria spoke to him "rudely and insultingly." On March 16, he sent a new head of department, General Nikolai Kuzmich Bogdanov, to Leningrad.

He scolded another first secretary of the regional committee, who complained about his Chekist:

- You sat up there, turned into a specific prince.

He ordered the new first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, Alexander Iordanovich Mirtskhulava, to "overthrow" the republican party apparatus: remove those who hold office for too long. Mirtskhulava, who in the thirties, under Beria, led the Georgian Komsomol, was imprisoned in March 1952 on the "Mingrelian case". On April 10, 1953, Beria pulled him out of prison. Four days later, yesterday's prisoner was approved as the owner of Georgia. But Beria's intercession will not be forgiven him: in September 1953 he will be removed from his high position.

Knowing well the situation in the country, Lavrenty Pavlovich made a bet on the national republics, union and autonomous. Beria spoke about the fact that they should be given more rights - primarily in the promotion of local personnel. The republics were angry because they were sent to the role of chiefs by people from the other side of the country who did not know either the local conditions or the language. And they did not want to know, but behaved in a businesslike manner.

The implementation of the proposals would mean an end to the fight against imaginary nationalism, the victims of which were outstanding cultural figures. The intelligentsia had a hard time with ideological campaigns that were offensive to national feelings. Beria proposed to expand teaching in native languages. I wanted to introduce national orders - in honor of folk heroes.

His assistant Boris Aleksandrovich Ludvigov later said during interrogation: "Beria proposed to establish a new order, higher than the Order of Lenin, namely the Order of People's Glory with hitherto unseen benefits for those awarded. A special procedure was envisaged for presenting this order at a session of the Supreme Council, the payment of a cash bonus, and the construction of a state dacha. He proposed to establish union and republican "orders of culture", for example, in Azerbaijan, the order of "Nizami", in Georgia, the order of "Rustaveli", in Ukraine, the order of "Shevchenko", in Armenia, the order of "Nalbandian". On these issues, Ordynstev, on behalf of Beria, contacted the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the indicated republics by telephone.

Lavrenty Pavlovich sent notes to the Presidium of the Central Committee on the situation in Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states. They talked about repressions and dispossession of kulaks, about forced Russification and mistakes in personnel policy. According to his notes, decisions were made on the promotion of national personnel, that the leading republican workers were required to know the local language and conduct office work in it.

Together with the decisions of the Presidium of the Central Committee, detailed notes of the Ministry of Internal Affairs signed by Beria were sent to Kiev, Minsk, Vilnius, so that it would be clear to everyone who exactly put

question and made a decision. After the arrest, Beria was forced to repent:

- On my part, insisting on the distribution of memorandums was stupidity and political thoughtlessness. Of course, this to a certain extent belittled the significance of the decisions of the Central Committee, and an unacceptable situation was created that the Ministry of Internal Affairs seemed to correct the Central Committees of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus, while the role of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was limited only to fulfilling the instructions of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the government.

Beria informed the Central Committee that in Lithuania "during the post-war period, more than 270 thousand people, that is, about ten percent of the population, were subjected to various types of repression. But the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania and the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR failed to decapitate the anti-Soviet underground. Only serious mistakes and weakness of the leadership of the Lithuanian SSR can explain that the bourgeois-nationalist underground not only has not been liquidated, but has managed to put down deep roots and even create some support for itself in the bowels of the population itself. The main mistake should be recognized that the party and Soviet leadership of Lithuania actually entrusted the important task of liquidating the bourgeois-nationalist underground to state security agencies, and they, in turn, reduced this matter to mass repressions and Chekist military operations.

In April 1953, Beria summoned the Minister of the Interior of Lithuania, Major General Pyotr Pavlovich Kondakov, to Moscow.

He made a fair career in state security, although he did not study for long - three classes of a vocational school and courses for the command staff of the Red Army in Kazan. He led the Smolensk, Novosibirsk and Crimean departments of state security until he was taken to the capital. For seven months, Kondakov was Ignatiev's deputy, but fell under another purge of organs arranged by Stalin. In March 1952 he was sent to Vilnius, he served as the Minister of the Interior of Lithuania for only a year.

Beria gathered his deputies and heads of departments. The situation in all three Baltic republics was discussed. Therefore, the ministers of internal affairs of Latvia, Lieutenant General Nikolai Kuzmich Kovalchuk, who was sent to Riga only in mid-February 1953, and Estonia, Colonel Valentin Ivanovich Moskalenko, a recent head of department in Chita, were also summoned to a meeting with Beria.

The Balts call the post-war period gloomy. They quickly forgot that the Nazis were going to evict them from their homes and free up land for German colonists, - because the Stalinist repressions resumed. The blow fell mainly on the village. In the course of accelerated collectivization, imaginary kulaks were expelled, their property was expropriated. Agriculture lost people who wanted and knew how to work. And people from the outside were sent to the republics as chiefs. The visitors proceeded from the premise that the Baltics are as much a part of the Soviet Union as any other region, so it makes no sense to learn the local language and delve into local customs. Naturally, this embittered the Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians.

Moscow was aware of how strong the discontent was. Extinguished by the usual methods. In May 1950, the Politburo distributed the graduates of the Higher School of the MGB. Most of them were sent to the Baltic states. Forty people to Lithuania, twenty-five to Latvia, twenty to Estonia. Twelve graduates were assigned to the military counterintelligence agencies of the Baltic Military District and the 8th Fleet, based in Tallinn, and fifteen more young officers were assigned to the naval counterintelligence agencies.

General Kondakov's report on the nationalist underground and the actions of bandits in the republic did not suit Beria. He asked the minister, who had come from Lithuania, why he called them "bandits".

"They are armed, robbing and killing Soviet people," Kondakov replied.

"You yourself are forcing them to such actions," Beria objected.

Beria called the repression of the Catholic clergy wrong, because believers perceive it as persecution of the church. He drew attention to the high role of the church, to the support enjoyed by the nationalist underground.

He offered to reconsider the cases against the exiled clergy, return them to Lithuania and through them influence the nationalist underground. When the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, Antanas Sniechkus, asked him to increase the jamming of foreign radio stations, Beria replied that he did not see any point in it.

Beria ordered that Kondakov be replaced "as a weak worker." In early May, he appointed Jonas Ionovich Viljūnas as the new Minister of the Interior of Lithuania from the post of chairman of the Kaunas city executive committee. Acting Lithuanian security officers worthy of promotion to the post of minister were not found. Remember Viljūnas. He became a Chekist after the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union. During the war he was in partisan detachments on the territory of Belarus. In the summer of 1947, Lieutenant Colonel Vildzhunas took off his shoulder straps because he was transferred to party work.

Beria fired Colonel Moskalenko and General Kovalchuk. new ministers in Tallinn and Riga also became local cadres.

Previously, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania did not dare to nominate Lithuanians for work in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, because many of them had relatives abroad. The head of the republic, Antanas Sniechkus, timidly raised this question at the secretariat of the Central Committee in Moscow:

- Do grandparents play a decisive role, and not the person himself?

Malenkov remarked indignantly:

- The bandits at home trust each other more than our workers.

But nothing has changed. And Beria canceled this practice. In Lithuania, his instructions were willingly put into practice. Within a few days, all senior officials in the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were replaced. We parted ways with visitors, with those who did not know the Lithuanian language. About a thousand people were fired, including the secretary of the party committee of the ministry. Deprived of office did not hesitate in expressions. The former head of one of the regional departments threw:

- These shepherds, who have now taken over the department, will not be able to lead and provide normal political leadership in the region.

All documents were written only in Lithuanian. Lithuanian was spoken at the meetings. They compiled lists of non-Lithuanians in the party and Soviet apparatus, found out where they intended to return after their release from office. There was talk throughout the republic that all Russians would leave and the collective farms would be dissolved.

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic Mechislovas Gedvilas at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party sympathetically addressed Lithuanians who do not know their native language:

- The Russians will be recalled, but where will you go, having forgotten the language of your fathers?

Frightening reports were sent to Moscow about what seditious speeches were being made in Lithuanian officials who were considered loyal to their circle.

The secretary of the Varena district party committee, Kashinskas, held a meeting with workers

district committee and the regional department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Delighted colleagues:

- Previously, the policy towards Lithuanians was wrong and was carried out in the same way as during the German occupation. Now the issue is correct. There is nothing for Russians to do in Lithuania, let them get out of here.

At the plenum, the secretary of the Ionishsky district party committee, Ratnikas, scolded the Russian workers in such a way that several people defiantly left, slamming the door. The first secretary of the Pajėgė district committee of the Genevėjius party proclaimed a toast in the restaurant:

- I drink for a united and independent Lithuania.

The wife of the owner of the district said that "trains will soon be sent and they will take out Russians in the same way as they took out the Lithuanians.

Vilis Krumins, the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia, recalled that they received a note from Beria in Riga and an instruction: to translate office work into the Latvian language, and to second the nomenclature workers who did not know Latvian to be placed at the disposal of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

They made a list of one hundred and seven people who were to be sent home. They called Moscow: how can you send these people away, because we have just invited them to Latvia?

The Central Committee threatened:

- Do not follow the instructions, you will bear party responsibility. And maybe not only the party.

Some party workers immediately forgot the Russian language. The secretary of the republican Central Committee for ideology, Arvid Yanovich Pelshe, a future member of the Politburo, who knew how to keep his nose to the wind, ordered:

- Personnel should be Latvianised.

But Beria was arrested, and the previous instructions were cancelled. Arvid Pelshe obediently turned into a stubborn fighter against all manifestations of "nationalism".

On May 16, Beria sent a note to the Presidium of the Central Committee about the trouble in Western Ukraine, where people are dissatisfied with the actions of the authorities. The note spoke of the scale of repression and dispossession in western Ukraine: between 1944 and 1953, almost half a million people were arrested, killed or deported. Beria came to the conclusion that the usual methods of fighting the underground bring a negative result:

"Chekist military operations, as a rule, were accompanied by continuous "combing" of settlements and mass searches of the population. Citizens were arrested and evicted on the basis of insignificant materials, and sometimes without any reason at all. Naturally, such a situation could not but embitter the broad sections of the population and contributed to the strengthening of the influence of enemy elements among them. Among the population of the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR, especially in rural areas, there is dissatisfaction with the measures taken by the Soviet government.

Beria noted mistakes in personnel policy: too many visitors. He demanded serious changes in the republic. Guided by Beria's critical note, a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was held in Kyiv. They recognized the unsatisfactory work of the Republican Politburo in governing the western regions, abolished the "vicious practice" of nominating workers from other regions to leadership positions in the western regions, and the translation of teaching in Ukrainian universities into Russian.

On June 4, the first secretary of the republican Central Committee was removed "as not providing leadership." Instead of Leonid Georgievich Melnikov, who, although he worked for many years in Poltava, Donetsk and Kyiv, was Russian according to his passport, a Ukrainian Alexei Illarionovich Kirichenko was appointed. True, it is not clear who benefited from this. He was a poorly educated man, rude, but Khrushchev liked him when he was in charge of Ukraine, and therefore Kirichenko made a fantastic career.

The new owner of the republic cheerfully urged to fulfill the will of Moscow:

"It is not enough for us to admit miscalculations and shortcomings. Our task is to deeply realize the political content of the mistakes made, the enormous significance of the assistance that the Central Committee of the CPSU is giving us by its resolution of May 26, and with the perseverance inherent in the Communists, to take up the elimination of miscalculations and shortcomings in the leadership of the western regions.

For the Ukrainian Chekists, Beria's ideas came as a surprise. Surprise was also caused by the instructions of Pavel Yakovlevich Meshik, who was appointed Minister of the Interior of the Republic in the spring of 1953. Speaking to the Chekists in Kyiv, he said:

- First of all, I want to congratulate you on the fact that Comrade Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria has been entrusted with the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior, that the dark period when the state security agencies were in the hands of adventurers like Ignatiev has finally ended. With the advent of Comrade Beria, the Chekist organs are again guarding the interests of the Soviet people, the interests of the Communist Party, guarding socialist legality ...

During the war, Pavel Meshik served as deputy head of the Main Directorate counterintelligence Smersh, then became the right hand of Beria in the atomic project.

He expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that operational-search activities end with the destruction of militants, and they are needed alive for propaganda work. Offered

to stop the arrests and expulsions of Uniate priests, he explained: this only embitters people, it is necessary to convince, not destroy.

Meshik did not know the Ukrainian language, but promised to learn it. He asked me to draw up papers for him in Ukrainian. He ordered to appoint those who know Ukrainian to leadership positions. And in Western Ukraine it was necessary to speak Ukrainian impeccably, so the local security agencies were ordered to recruit three hundred people from local natives. The personnel officers had a problem, because almost every resident of Western Ukraine somehow turned out to be connected with the underground.

At a meeting of the party committee, Minister Meshik remarked:

- Listening to the Voice of America and the BBC is not a crime at all, I listen to them myself.

Members of the party committee of the ministry decided that they had misheard. Meshik did not hesitate to criticize the party apparatus. At a meeting in Lvov, he scornfully threw at the secretary of the Central Committee of Ukraine, who wished to control the work of the organs:

"He knows nothing about this business, and there is nothing for him to do there.

I broke up with the deputy for personnel:

- You do not know how to protect the Chekists, you have no place in the state security agencies.

Meshik banned "special methods" of interrogation. He ordered not to carry out the death sentences already handed down to OUN members. He ordered to reconsider the case in order to release some OUN members and with their help to play games with the underground. Purpose: to suppress it with less blood.

As a deputy, Meshik brought from Moscow another veteran Chekist, Lieutenant General Solomon Rafailovich Milshtein. He began his service with Beria in the GPU of Georgia. He went along the party line, became the secretary of the Tbilisi city committee. Following Lavrenty Pavlovich, he moved to Moscow and headed the Main Transport Directorate of the NKVD. He was very close to Beria. Talking on the phone, he called him "Comrade Lavrenty."

Milshtein explained to the head of the Lviv Regional Directorate, Lieutenant General Timofey Amvrosievich Strokach and the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Lieutenant General Petr Ivanovich Ivashutin (the future head of military intelligence of the Ministry of Defense), that now everything will be different, party bodies will not be able to interfere, as it was before, into the work of the Chekists, the heads of the regional departments will become independent of the secretaries of the regional committees.

The well-worn people of Kiev were dumbfounded by the instructions of the Moscow people. The new instructions meant a complete change in the KGB line, a turn by one hundred and eighty degrees. Milshtein explained to his subordinates that the liquidation of the Uniate Church is a politically harmful event and is not supported by the Ukrainian people:

- The time has come to bring the clergy closer to Soviet power, to force them to change mindset and work for our benefit.

Immediately after the arrest of Beria, on June 28, 1953, General Strokach wrote a statement addressed to Khrushchev, whom he knew well from joint work in Kyiv:

"In April, Comrade Meshik instructed me, as the head of the department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the Lvov region, to collect and report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR information about the national composition of the leading party bodies. At the same time, Comrade Meshik proposed to inform about the shortcomings in the work of Party organs in collective farms, enterprises, educational institutions, among the intelligentsia and among young people.

Considering such instructions incorrect, since the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs do not have the right to check the work of party organs, I called Comrade Meshik on the VC and checked whether he had really given such an instruction. Tov. Meshik attacked me with curses:

- You generally cannot be entrusted with our Chekist secret tasks. You will immediately go to the regional committee and report them to the secretary. But know that this task comes from Comrade Beria and cannot be delayed with its completion. Try to complete it today.

I reported to the secretary of the regional party committee, comrade Serdyuk, about what I received from comrade Meshik

clearly misleading. Serdyuk was indignant and immediately reported to the former secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine Comrade Melnikov.

On the same day in the evening Comrade Beria called me in Lvov:

- You don't understand anything! Why did they go to the regional committee and tell Serdyuk about the assignment they had received? Instead of helping, you are putting your foot down on Comrade Meshik. We will expel you from the organs, arrest you and rot in the camps! We will grind you to powder, turn you into camp dust! Do you understand or not? Understood?

Comrade Beria did not listen to my attempts to explain himself and hung up.

I reported to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine Comrade Melnikov about the remark I received from Comrade Beria and asked for his intervention and protection. Tov. Melnikov reassured me, advised me not to worry:

- The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine knows you, trusts you and will never let you offend. We know that you were well received in Lviv, that you are satisfied with your work, and that you work calmly.

Despite this, on June 12, the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs removed me from the post of head of the Internal Affairs Directorate and recalled me to Moscow. Tov. Meshik in a mocking form told me:

- Well, how did you get from Comrade Beria? You will be smarter in the future. And Melnikov, the secretary of the Central Committee, is a bad Chekist. He immediately betrayed you as a spy of the Central Committee. He calls me and says that Strokach reported to the secretary of the regional committee, Serdyuk, that I, Meshik, was collecting information about party cadres. Is it possible to expose your agents like that!

Being in Moscow since June 15, I several times asked Comrade Beria and his deputy Comrade Kobulova B.Z. accept me for a personal explanation, but to no avail."

Removed from his post, General Strokach told how he toiled in Moscow in anticipation of a new appointment and went to Lieutenant General Amayak Kobulov, deputy head of the control inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs - as a person close to the top - for advice and help.

Kobulov explained to him:

- Now the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will not be so dependent on the party bodies, as it was before. You have no idea what rights Comrade Beria enjoys. He decisively breaks all the old orders. There is no need to be afraid that the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the republican minister will fall into disgrace before the party organs. Here's a fresh example for you: Comrade Melnikov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, ran into Meshik and flew off, even though he was on the presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

General Strokach's statement came at just the right time - he was quoted as evidence of Beria's intention to put the Chekist apparatus above the party one.

Timofey Strokach, a former border guard and partisan, had every reason to be offended by Beria and his nominees. Before Stalin's death, he was the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine for seven years, and Pyotr Ivashutin was the Republican Minister of State Security. But at least Ivashutin was left in Kyiv as a deputy, and Strokach was transferred to Lvov as the head of the regional administration.

Hmayak Kobulov described the conversation with Strokach differently. At that moment, one of his subordinates was in his office. A distressed Strokach appeared and asked that general to come out to talk face to face:

- Strokach said that he got into trouble. The head of the secretariat of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine called him in Lvov and asked him to pick up materials on excesses in Western Ukraine in the regional committee of the party. He had the opportunity to get all this behind the scenes, but the devil pushed him, and he turned to the secretary of the Lvov regional party committee, Serdyuk. He became angry and reported to the Secretary of the Central Committee of Ukraine Melnikov. Apparently, Melnikov, in turn, called Moscow, because after a while Beria's phone rang. Beria scolded him for the fact that he, Strokach, was putting sticks in Meshik's wheels. Therefore, he, Strokach, is assigned to the Vladimir region. And Strokach cried. He also cried because Beria scolded him in vain, since the basis for removing Melnikov from the post of first secretary of the Central Committee of Ukraine was the materials obtained by him, Strokach ... I reassured him, well,

advised me to go to Beria and give a personal explanation, reassured me that all this misunderstanding would be sorted out.

On June 8, 1953, Beria sent a letter to the Presidium of the Central Committee about the national composition of the apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus. He wrote that there are almost no Belarusians in leadership positions in the apparatus of the ministry and local bodies: "About the same situation with the use of Belarusian personnel takes place in republican, regional and district party and Soviet organizations", in the western regions there are almost no leadership positions. local natives. In the institutes, teaching is conducted exclusively in Russian, although in the thirties they also taught in Belarusian. Along the way, he noted the plight of the peasants: in the western regions, on collective farms, people receive very little for workdays ...

Major General Mikhail Ivanovich Baskakov served as the Minister of Internal Affairs of Belarus. He was an orphan. His parents left him very young, he did not know his real name. He was brought up in the Gzhatsk district by a woman who received six rubles of state money every month before the revolution. Baskakov graduated four-year school and after the revolution he worked as a mechanic and fireman at a sawmill. In 1933 he was taken to the OGPU. He successfully moved up the career ladder. He spent the war as head of the state security department in Gorky. He led the state security in the Khabarovsk Territory and in Uzbekistan. Came to Minsk in February 1952

of the year.

In March 1953, two ministries were merged - the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of State Security. In Minsk, they chose who to put at the head of a single department - General Baskakov or General Belchenko, who served for ten years as the republican interior minister. The first secretary of the Central Committee, Nikolai Semenovich Patolichev, chose Baskakov, this was his man.

Once the Belarusian minister was looking for Beria. HF telephone operators found him in Patolichev's office. When they were connected, Beria asked:

- Where are you?

- In the Central Committee, at the first secretary.

"Go to your room and call back from there," Beria ordered.

On June 6, 1953, General Baskakov flew to Moscow. First Deputy Union Minister Bogdan Kobulov instructed his assistant, together with Kondakov, to write a note addressed to Beria.

"Within 30–40 minutes, a note was dictated to the stenographer, and it included only data that showed organizations where there were few Belarusians and more Russians," said Kondakov. - The note was signed by me and handed over to Kobulov. Literally an hour later, I was summoned to Beria, where they announced that I had been relieved of the post of Minister of the Interior of Belarus.

Beria offered to return to this post to General Belchenko. He refused, because he did not know the Belarusian language. With his power, instead of Baskakov, Lavrenty Pavlovich appointed his recent deputy, Colonel Mikhail Fedorovich Dechko, as minister, whom he charged with the duty "to take measures to staff the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Belarus with verified local personnel. A month and a half later, Baskakov will return to his office - as a victim of Beria ...

Lavrenty Pavlovich proposed to replace the first secretary of the republic: Russian Nikolai Semenovich Patolichev to Belarusian Mikhail Vasilyevich Zimyanin.

Zimyanin, a former partisan, made a successful career after the war. In 1947 he was appointed secretary, then second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus. But in the spring of 1950, Stalin sent the well-known Patolichev to Minsk personally.

Relations between the first secretary and the second did not work out, and in the end they were divorced. In 1953, Mikhail Vasilyevich was recalled to Moscow, appointed a member of the collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with an eye to the embassy post. And Lavrenty Pavlovich was just looking for a prominent Belarusian, a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Early June 1953

Zimyanin received a call from the Beria secretariat at the Foreign Ministry and was asked to dial Lavrenty Pavlovich by turntable.

He asked indignantly:

How did you get into the Foreign Ministry?

Zimyanin explained that this was the decision of the Presidium of the Central Committee.

- Do you know the Belarusian language?

- I know.

"I'll call you," Beria promised and hung up.

Zimyanin went to Molotov:

- I would like to stay in the Foreign Ministry.

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich made it clear that this was a proposal against which "it is difficult for him to object." On June 12, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a resolution on Belarus, similar to the Ukrainian one. Zimyanin was again ordered to call Beria. He said that he was waiting for him on Monday, June 15th. I received Mikhail Vasilyevich in the evening. He spoke briefly as usual.

- The decision on your appointment to the Foreign Ministry is erroneous, wrong.

"My business is a soldier's," Zimyanin answered in his own style. - The Central Committee decides on my work. I cannot argue whether this is right or wrong, but I am obliged to fulfill it, like any other.

"Your business is not entirely a soldier's," Beria objected reasonably. - And not even a soldier at all. Belarusians are surprisingly calm people. They are not nominated for leadership work - they are silent. They give little bread - they are silent. Uzbeks or Kazakhs in their place would have yelled at the whole world. What kind of people are Belarusians!

I asked his opinion about Patolichev. And immediately interrupted Zimyanin:

- Patolichev is a bad leader, an empty person.

He explained that he had written a note to the Central Committee in which he criticized the unsatisfactory state of affairs in the republic:

- We need to fix it. You have to do it.

And in a very sharp form he warned:

- Do not look for your bosses, as your predecessors did.

He warned that he had already appointed a new minister of internal affairs of the republic - Dechko, new heads of regional departments - Belarusians:

"You need to get to know them. It is necessary to support the Chekists, they have a sharp job, and the duty of the Chekists is to support you.

He asked if Zimyanin had read his note to the Central Committee on the situation in the republic. Mikhail Vasilyevich knew nothing about her. Beria ordered a member of the secretariat to bring a copy and painted it for Zimyanin. He went into the secretariat room and read it carefully there.

Nikolai Semenovitch Patolichev left memoirs published after his death. General Baskakov, who had already been removed from the post of Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic, warned him of the imminent danger. And he learned about the upcoming personnel changes from General Kondakov, who, while in Moscow, heard that material was being collected on Patolichev.

Nikolai Semenovitch went to Moscow. There he met the former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Leonid Melnikov, who had already been released from work, and who was being drafted as an ambassador to Romania. Patolichev went around everyone who made decisions. I visited the secretary of the Central Committee Khrushchev and the head of the government Malenkov. None admitted that Patolichev was planned to be relieved of his post. Smart people advised: ask for an appointment with Beria.

Patolichev called him. Beria pleaded overwork and avoided the meeting. This has already said a lot to the experienced Patolichev. Nikolai Semenovitch returned to Minsk with nothing. A few days later, Khrushchev called and said that he was being dismissed from his post "for violating the Leninist national policy."

But Patolichev was incredibly lucky. Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus, at which

the first secretary was accused of incorrect selection and placement of personnel, major mistakes in the management of the national economy, began on June 25, 1953, on the eve of Beria's arrest, which, of course, was not suspected in Minsk.

The plenum was opened by Timofey Sazonovich Gorbunov, secretary of the Central Committee of Belarus for propaganda. The gloomy Patolichev was sitting on the podium, but aloof. There are two items on the agenda: tasks of the communists of the republic and organizational. Returning to his homeland, Zimyanin lashed out with harsh criticism at the first secretary, whom he was supposed to replace. He spoke in Belarusian. For the first time in the history of the Communist Party of the Republic. Patolichev was also criticized by republican workers, including the first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, Petr Andreevich Abrasimov, the future ambassador to the GDR.

Patolichev spoke, ritually admitted his mistakes, obediently said:

- I came here on the instructions of the Central Committee, and I am leaving on its instructions.

The next day the plenum continued. But while in Minsk, following the instructions of Moscow, the first secretary was smashed to smithereens, Beria was arrested in the capital. The situation has completely changed. Patolichev was called to the HF apparatus. Malenkov and Khrushchev wished to speak with him:

"Beria has been arrested, but keep it a secret for now. If the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Belarus will ask the Central Committee of the CPSU, the decision on your recall may be canceled.

The Moscow comrades also spoke to Zimyanin. After the break, Mikhail Vasilyevich again appeared on the podium and just as convincingly suggested that Patolichev not be removed. And the people who had just demanded the removal of their first secretary voted to "ask the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU to review the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU of June 12 this year. in relation to Comrade. Patolichev Nikolai Semenovich and leave him as the first secretary of the Central Committee of the CPB.

They did not want to offend Mikhail Vasilyevich Zimyanin. The IV plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus recommended that he be approved as chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic. Molotov spoke about this at the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in Moscow:

- With great unanimity, we decided to leave Patolichev as the first secretary, and we made Comrade Zimyanin, a good comrade, chairman of the Council of Ministers of Belarus.

But Zimyanin did not want to remain in Minsk on the sidelines. He had to leave the republic again, and even explain his relationship with Beria. He was again assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Lions and rabbits in the Kremlin

It's not even that Malenkov felt insecure in the role of the first person. And the fact that he could not hide it. Officials are afraid of tough and cruel bosses, they despise soft ones, consider them weaklings. Outwardly, Minister of Defense Nikolai Bulganin in a marshal's uniform seemed to be a strong figure. But he was known for his predilection for pretty girls. In general, he loved to enjoy life. He also lacked willpower and determination.

The country was ruled by the tandem Malenkov - Beria. Formally, Georgy Maximilianovich was the eldest. In fact, Beria subordinated him to his will. Lavrenty Pavlovich contemptuously called him "Malanya" - for his softness - and took advantage of his weak will. For Beria, Malenkov was a convenient screen.

"The character of a person is nowhere so clearly manifested as in the game," recalled Merkulov. - I have repeatedly observed Beria in the game of chess, volleyball. For Beria in the game (and I think in life) it was important to win at all costs, by any means, at any cost, even dishonestly. He could, for example, like Nozdryov, steal an opponent's piece from the chessboard in order to win."

The world is divided into lions and rabbits.

There were only two lions - Khrushchev and Beria.

The difference between them was that Nikita Sergeevich clearly understood how dangerous Lavrenty Pavlovich was. And Beria Khrushchev underestimated.

It is generally accepted that the arrest of Beria is a turning point in the history of the country, the beginning of the struggle against Stalin's personality cult. No, in the summer of 1953 it was a struggle for power and for survival. We got rid of the most dangerous opponent. They saved themselves.

No evidence was found to support the version that Beria was preparing to overthrow the party leadership and arrest everyone. Lavrenty Pavlovich, it seems, was going to eventually become the leader of the party and state. He probably thought to himself: why is he worse than Stalin? But he was in no hurry.

Beria was arrested without charge, without warrant, without excitement.
criminal case. Khrushchev spoke frankly:

"Comrades, this is the only way to deal with such a treacherous person. If we had told him even a little earlier that he was a scoundrel, I am convinced that he would have dealt with us. He knew how to do this ... He is capable of pouring poison, he is capable of all vile things ... We believed that if he finds out that a question about him will be discussed at a meeting, then it could turn out like this: we will come to this meeting, and he will raise his thugs and the devil knows what he will do.

During the perestroika years, stories of retired officers appeared about how, on the day of Beria's arrest, their units were alerted and ordered to prepare for battle. And it seems that the officers of the 3rd Directorate (military counterintelligence) of the Ministry of the Interior tried to prevent the troops from turning around. The head of the 3rd department was General Sergei Goglidze ... There were rumors that a division of the Interior Ministry troops was pulled up to Moscow and was only waiting for Beria's order to enter the capital.

Professor Naumov:

- The division is still standing there - this is the former division of the internal troops named after Dzerzhinsky ... There is no evidence that Beria was preparing to seize power. And he didn't need to. He kept them all in his hands thanks to his dossiers. Anyone could be accused of something criminal at any moment. But he didn't hurry. He believed that this fruit was not yet ripe. He waited for the power itself to fall at his feet.

If Beria was not going to remove his comrades from the Presidium of the Central Committee, then why Khrushchev and others arrested him?

Professor Naumov:

- He rapidly grew authority in the country. Malenkov, Bulganin, Molotov, Khrushchev seemed weak as statesmen against his background. By virtue of his nature, he suppressed everyone, did not let anyone speak at meetings, opened the discussion himself, summed up the results himself, interrupted other speakers, and could offend with a rude word. They were afraid of him and rebuff
could not give.

After his arrest, Lavrenty Pavlovich asked him to forgive him for his manners: "My behavior at a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers was very often wrong and unacceptable, introducing nervousness and excessive harshness. I realized that sometimes it came to unacceptable rudeness and impudence towards comrades Khrushchev and Bulganin.

With smaller figures, he did not stand on ceremony at all. In March, he summoned the head of the Council of Ministers, Pomaznev, and said that he was reducing the contingent served by the security department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. He inquired about who it was. Beria listed the names of officials who, after Stalin's death, were removed from higher posts: Kosygin, Pegov, Suslov, Ponomarenko ... He dismissively threw: the Chekists would no longer serve their dachas.

The plot matured in early June 1953. Not everyone could pull off such a business. Khrushchev became the engine of the conspiracy. While Beria was in power, Nikita Sergeevich was doomed to be on the sidelines.

Malenkov agreed to remove Beria because he himself was afraid of him. Didn't understand that

deprives itself of support. As soon as Lavrenty Pavlovich disappeared, his comrades-in-arms quickly ate Georgy Maximilianovich. Molotov, Khrushchev and Malenkov worked on other members of the Central Committee Presidium. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich played a special role - he persuaded the veterans. Khrushchev did not yet have sufficient authority, they did not believe Malenkov.

They risked their heads. Important conversations were held on the street. We proceeded from the fact that you can not use the phone, discuss something serious in your offices or in your apartments and dachas. At the plenum of the Central Committee in July 1953, Bulganin said:

- The members of the Presidium were under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Beria. The members of the presidium were monitored. Comrades, we have at our disposal the recordings of the eavesdropping of Khrushchev, Malenkov, Molotov, Bulganin, Voroshilov. They were being watched. I will cite one small, perhaps, fact, but it is typical in order to understand the situation. Two or three days, I think, before he was arrested on June 26, we drove by car at half past one at night, having finished working late, to the apartment - Comrade Malenkov, Comrade Khrushchev, Beria and I - he drove us to the apartment. We live - Georgy Maksimilianovich, Nikita Sergeevich and I - in the same house. Nikita and I live opposite each other on the same floor, and Georgy is one floor below. We arrived at the apartment. Georgy Maksimilianovich went up to the fourth floor, while Nikita and I went up to the fifth.

We went up to the platform, we stand and say that it's hot at home, we'll go to the dacha. He says: "I'll go home and take a look." And I say: "I'll go straight to the dacha." I got into the same elevator, went down, went to the dacha. The next day, Nikita Sergeevich calls me in the middle of the day and says: "Listen, I want to ask for verification. Did you tell anyone that we went to the country? Have you had a conversation with anyone? How does Beria know that we have gone to the dacha? He called me and said: "You went to the dacha with Bulganin."

The next day, in Comrade Malenkov's room, Beria says: "They are cunning. We went up to the apartment, and then went to the dacha. I say: "It's very hot at home, let's go to the country." "Come on," he says, "you didn't go into the apartment, went down in the elevator and went to the dacha, and Khrushchev really came in and followed you." We decided to turn it into a joke. Nikita Sergeevich says: "How cool is it to find out what do you have, agents?"

Bulganin continued:

- Comrades, the exposure of Beria, I will tell you, in particular, the completion of this exposure and the arrest of Beria itself was a difficult and risky business. And here we must pay tribute to comrades Malenkov, Khrushchev and Molotov (stormy applause in the hall), who organized this business well and brought it to the end.

Khrushchev interrupted him:

- There is one amendment: you don't exclude yourself from this either.
There was applause.

Bulganin:

- I am very grateful to you, Nikita, for this remark and declare to you and everyone else comrades, that I did what every decent member of the Party should do.

Malenkov said that the state security service was eavesdropping on him. Khrushchev objected that he was being overheard. They knew full well that they were both eavesdropping. The members of the Presidium of the Central Committee were monitored by Stalin. The bodyguards did not so much take care of the leaders of the state as they reported who the ward was talking to, who he called, so Beria knew who was sleeping at home and who was in the country. In addition, Beria ordered the Kremlin Medical and Sanitary Department to send him information about the health status of ministers and others.

top officials.

On July 23, 1953, the new heads of the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported to Malenkov that at the height of the war, listening equipment had been installed in the apartments of Marshals Budyonny, Zhukov, Timoshenko on Granovsky Street, house 3. Bogdan Kobulov, Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, ordered to listen to Budyonny. Apartments Zhukov and Timoshenko in June 1943 - Head of the Main Directorate of Military Counterintelligence Smersh Viktor Abakumov. Only Stalin could give them such an order.

Marshal Voroshilov had been eavesdropped on since 1942, when Stalin became angry with him for failures at the front and assigned him the post of commander-in-chief of the partisan movement, which was insignificant for the former people's commissar of defense.

Comrades in the party leadership overthrew Beria not only because he claimed the first role. They feared that he would pull out documents testifying to their involvement in the repressions.

Lavrenty Pavlovich, having at his disposal the archives of state security, could easily publish any documents and expose his comrades on the Presidium of the Central Committee as criminals, and himself as an exposé of their crimes. He knew who was involved in what. And everyone was to blame. Some signed ready-made lists, others themselves demanded someone to be arrested. Beria held everyone in his hands. The head of the Central Archive Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Vasily Dmitrievich Styrov, has already ordered his employees to collect all the materials that mention Malenkov.

And Lavrenty Pavlovich believed that he should be afraid. At a meeting one day sincerely remarked:

- There are no people working for conscience, everyone works for fear.

Malenkov was the first to propose that a plenum of the Central Committee be held in April 1953 to condemn the cult of personality. But he did not dare to name the leader, and Beria spoke directly about the cult of Stalin, about Stalin's mistakes and crimes.

He familiarized the members of the Central Committee with his note on the "case of doctors." It is a voluminous document of several dozen pages. It cited the testimony of MGB investigators and the resolutions of Stalin, who demanded that the arrested be beaten mercilessly. They gave the impression of an exploding bomb.

"Members and candidate members of the Central Committee were introduced in the Kremlin," recalled Konstantin Simonov, "with documents testifying to the direct participation of Stalin in the whole story with the 'killer doctors', with the testimony of the arrested head of the investigative unit of the former MGB about his conversations with Stalin, about Stalin's demands to toughen interrogations - and so on and so forth. The reading was difficult, the notes were similar to the truth and testified to Stalin's morbid mental state, his suspicion and cruelty, bordering on psychosis ... Therefore, to the moral blow that I experienced during Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress, I was probably more ready than many other people."

Beria thereby relieved himself of responsibility and intended to call others to account. This frightened the party apparatus. Khrushchev and Malenkov chose to accuse Beria of all crimes.

How did it happen that such an experienced person, such a skillful intriguer who survived under Stalin, allowed himself to be arrested? He relaxed, lost his vigilance, underestimated his comrades, especially Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev.

"He considered us simpletons," Malenkov would later say at the plenum.

"But we turned out to be not such simpletons," Khrushchev will respond with satisfaction.

The fate of Beria was decided by the active and assertive Khrushchev. After the overthrow of Beria, he will be promoted to the main roles and will be elected First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Other members of the party leadership were not going to shoot Beria. Malenkov considered it sufficient to transfer the post of Minister of the Interior to someone else, to deprive Lavrenty Pavlovich of the post of First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, but to appoint him Minister of the Oil Industry.

General Nikolai Zakharov on June 25, 1953, at about midnight, checked the posts on Granovsky Street, where the commandant's office of the security department was located, since several members of the Central Committee Presidium lived there. Four ZIS government limousines (two with guards) drove up to the house. Zakharov hid behind a corner and began to watch.

Malenkov got out of the first car, followed by Beria. They talked for a few minutes, then parted. Georgy Maximilianovich went up to his apartment. Beria

went to his home. The next day will be his last.

The arrest of Beria was undertaken by the Minister of Defense Bulganin. He entrusted direct leadership to his new first deputy marshal Zhukov. While working on his memoirs, Georgy Konstantinovich described these events. But he was not allowed to print a chapter entitled "After Stalin's death". Only in 1974, when Zhukov died, the text was brought to the head of the general department of the Central Committee Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko, he gave the manuscript for safekeeping in the 6th sector. It was published by the Historical Archive magazine (No. 3/1999).

On that March day, Zhukov, who commanded the troops of the Ural Military District, returned to Sverdlovsk from the exercises. Bulganin was looking for him. Ordered by phone:

- Tomorrow morning you need to be in Moscow.

Zhukov tried to find out the reason for the urgent call.

The answer was:

- Come and see.

"In recent years, Moscow rarely called me to please me with something pleasant," Zhukov recalled, so he could expect anything.

He was taken directly from the airfield to the Ministry of Defense. Bulganin was already in his overcoat, he hurried:

- The plenum of the Central Committee will be held today. You need to be. I'm in a hurry to the Kremlin.

Zhukov went to the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Vasilevsky. That one too

knew nothing.

On the same day, Zhukov was appointed First Deputy Minister of Defense.

"In the past, not everything was smooth between us," Bulganin told him. - But we must put an end to the past and work on healthy, friendly principles.

"You did a lot of unpleasant things for me by exposing Stalin to the blows," answered Zhukov, - but if you sincerely want friendly work, let's forget about the past.

Bulganin attracted him to prepare for the arrest of Beria, but the order was given by the main person in the country - Malenkov. Khrushchev asked:

- Do you have any doubts about this?

- What doubts can there be? The order will be fulfilled.

"Keep in mind," Khrushchev remarked, "that Beria is agile and quite physically strong." Human. Plus, he appears to be armed.

"Of course, I'm not a specialist in arrests," Zhukov answered with his characteristic confidence, "did not get to do this. But my hand won't tremble.

Zhukov selected people whom he trusted and who were not afraid. One commander fainted when he was told what was to be done. The Marshal took four people to help: the commander of the Moscow Air Defense District, Colonel General Kirill Semenovich Moskalenko, the first deputy commander of the district, Lieutenant General Pavel Fedorovich Batitsky, the chief of staff of the Moscow Air Defense District, Major General Alexei Ivanovich Baksov, and the head of the political department of the district, Major General Ivan Grigoryevich Zub.

Zhukov said that preparations for the arrest of Beria took about a month. In order to avoid leakage of information under the pretext of a business trip, the participants in the operation were isolated even from their families. On that day, everyone was gathered with weapons from the minister. Bulganin and Zhukov, in their unchecked vehicles, brought the officers to the Kremlin, ostensibly to report on the situation in Moscow's air defense system. They took maps, diagrams and other secret materials with them so that the sentries at the entrance to the meeting room could not seize personal weapons from the officers, as was supposed to.

The meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers began. Malenkov said:

- Since all the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee have gathered, let's first discuss party affairs.

"Let's discuss the Beria case," Khrushchev suggested.

Beria, who did not expect anything like this, listened in amazement to the

accusations.

Georgy Maksimilianovich said that the state security agencies need to put under the control of the party in order to exclude the repetition of previous crimes:

- Bodies occupy such a place in the system of the state apparatus, where there is the greatest opportunity to abuse power. It turned out that Comrade Beria from this post controls both the party and the government. This is fraught with big troubles if it is not corrected right away... Otherwise, disunity has arisen, we do everything with caution, we tune in against each other. But we need a monolithic team!.. Subordinate the Directorate of Security to the Central Committee, otherwise you won't even take a step without control... The Central Committee must check the organization of wiretapping, the comrades are not sure who is wiretapping whom.

Khrushchev also spoke briefly. After that, Beria announced that he had been arrested.

Officers entered, led by Zhukov and General Moskalenko. The officers were armed. Zhukov was also chosen because he was physically strong. Kirill Moskalenko was frail, they were afraid that Beria would knock him down. But there was no need to use force. I found it on Beria like tetanus. Zhukov with a sharp movement threw away the folder with papers lying in front of him, thinking that it contained a weapon. There were no weapons.

Beria was taken away. He didn't have time to say anything.

Lavrenty Pavlovich did not imagine that he was awaiting trial and execution. At a meeting of the presidium, he was accused of placing the Ministry of the Interior over the party and the government, that he was arrogant and rude to his comrades. For this they do not shoot, Beria rightly believed. He forgot that he himself shot and for less. The comrades were mortally afraid of even the arrested Beria. We wanted to protect ourselves. Therefore, he was not just removed from his post, but decided to destroy him.

Far from all the participants in the meeting hastily assembled in the Kremlin were informed about what would happen. Khrushchev told Mikoyan on the way to the meeting: they were traveling in the same car. Voroshilov - Malenkov. Voroshilov rushed to hug him. Malenkov:

Hush, he's listening.

"If he overhears, he won't have time to decipher..."

And someone found out only at the moment when the meeting began. When Beria was taken away, the meeting continued. So everyone had time to recover from the shock and take the right party position.

Beria was kept in the rest room until late in the evening. The guards were changed in the Kremlin, but they risked taking the arrested person out only when it got dark. They wrapped it in a carpet, carried it out and stuffed it into Bulganin's huge limousine. They took me to the guardhouse of the headquarters of the Moscow military district.

The head of the guardhouse, Colonel Sergei Petrovich Gavrillov, told how this happened during perestroika. Minister Bulganin arrived at seven in the evening, chose the camera himself, ordered to cut off the heating battery, which could smash his head, and braid the window with wire so that it would not be possible to break the window and cut the veins with fragments. They did not want Beria to commit suicide. At half past one in the night Beria was delivered. The guardhouse was cleared of all detainees. The guard has been changed. They dug trenches, armored personnel carriers were ready for battle.

Members of the Presidium of the Central Committee sat in the Kremlin until late at night, until they received a message that Beria had been taken to the guardhouse. Then they just parted ways. But they worried in vain. No one even tried to come to the aid of the recent owner of the Lubyanka.

On June 26, the head of the government security department, Colonel Zakharov, was urgently summoned to the First Deputy Minister of the Interior, Colonel General Sergei Nikiforovich Kruglov. He was sitting in an unbuttoned tunic, his hair disheveled. Asked:

- Do you know that Beria has been arrested?

Zakharov was dumbfounded:

- Hear it for the first time.

So, you've been given a task. Urgently go to his dacha in Sosnovka. Disarm and

change the guard. How many guards are there? Five? We will replace everyone, then we will solve the issue of their employment. But that is not all. You are instructed to inform Beria's wife that her husband has been arrested. Tell her that she must not leave the dacha. We will turn off the connection, such a command has been given. Is the task clear?

- And what about his attached Sarkisov and Nadaraya?
- Don't worry. With regard to them and the Beria mansion, measures have already been taken.

Zakharov took a group of officers from the reserve department and went to Sosnovka. He called the guards of the Beria dacha one by one and took away their weapons. Then he entered the house and asked the maid to tell Nina Teimurazovna that he would like to talk to her. When she heard about her husband's arrest, she burst into tears.

A candidate member of the Presidium of the Central Committee, the first secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Mir-Jafar Baghirov arrived in Moscow. Call Mikoyan:

- I call Lavrenty, but not a single phone answers. What happened to you?
- Mikoyan knew that his phone was being tapped and answered cautiously:

- Tomorrow you will go to the Central Committee and find out everything.

Even a candidate member of the Presidium of the Central Committee was in complete ignorance.

Meshik was arrested in Kyiv. Colonel Georgy Zakharovich Sannikov, who served in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, drew attention to the fact that the guards suddenly changed in the building. Army officers in field uniforms appeared. They demanded that the entire operational staff hand over their weapons. Strangers walked around the offices and collected pistols.

When it was announced to Mexic that he had been arrested, the already former minister asked:

- Does Comrade Beria know?

They answered him mockingly:

- Known.

In the afternoon, the Ukrainian Chekists were gathered, and Tymofiy Strokach, who had just been appointed Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, triumphantly announced that "the enemy of the party and the Soviet people, Beria and his proteges" had been arrested. The Chekists were shocked: Stalin's loyal comrades-in-arms were arrested. What happened? From the audience began to ask:

Why did they take away the weapons? Were we specially disarmed? Are we not trusted?

Strokach reassured his subordinates:

"The weapons will be returned to you today. I have already given the command.

Meshik, who in the old days beat prisoners himself with fists and a belt, went on the same case with Beria. He will be shot on December 23, 1953. Milstein, who was tried separately, on January 14, 1955.

Two associates of Beria were arrested in Berlin. The head of military counterintelligence, Colonel General Sergei Goglidze, and Lieutenant General Amayak Kobulov flew to the GDR at the head of a group of state security officers to restore order after the popular uprising. And suddenly, from Moscow, an instruction came from Moscow that struck the Soviet High Commissioner, Vladimir Semenov, to arrest both Chekist generals and send them to the capital. Semyonov called Goglidze and asked him to come urgently:

- There are important things.

When the general appeared in Semyonov's office, two officers entered with pistols in their hands. Marshal Vasily Danilovich Sokolovsky, Chief of the General Staff, who was in Berlin, said:

- According to the decision of the court, I declare you under arrest.

Goglidze was taken away. But Kobulov did not want to come. Beria had already been arrested in Moscow, and Kobulov Sr. was also taken, so Amayak Zakharovich was not connected to anyone via HF. He didn't understand what was happening. To the invitation to come to Semyonov, he answered with concern:

- I'm trying to connect with Moscow, but there is no connection. I'll call and jump.

"My connection is working," Semyonov offered kindly. - Come and call, Amayak.

Kobulov has arrived. The next day, Semyonov and Sokolovsky on a special plane flew to Moscow. Goglidze and Kobulov were transported in the same plane under heavy guard.

Beria was arrested on Friday. Newspaper editors were instructed by the Central Committee to remove any mention of him, local party organs - to remove his portraits. Sunday newspapers on the front page reported that the leaders of the party and government were present on Saturday, June 27, at the Bolshoi Theater for the second performance of the new opera by composer Yuri Aleksandrovich Shaporin, The Decembrists. Beria was absent.

The famous scientist recalled how in a rural pub they received a radio message about the arrest of Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, who instilled fear in every Soviet people, who had just been among the celestials. Taking a beer mug, one of the workers remarked:

- Fuck you now, Lavrenty Palych, drink fresh beer.

And that's it. When big bosses are removed, there is a feeling of the triumph of justice: here you were sitting on top, commanding us, and now you are nobody. A kind of grim satisfaction.

No one in the state security apparatus tried to release their boss, as the Kremlin feared. The head of the 9th department (terror and sabotage abroad) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lieutenant General Pavel Sudoplatov, recalled that on the evening of June 26, returning from work to his dacha, he was surprised to see a column of tanks on the highway. In the morning, having arrived at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, he noticed that the portrait of Beria, which hung in his waiting room, had disappeared.

The leadership of the ministry was gathered in the conference hall. The meeting was led by the first deputy ministers, Generals Kruglov and Serov. Kruglov said that the former Minister Beria was arrested for provocative anti-state actions. He said that he would report to Comrade Malenkov: the bodies and troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were loyal to the government and the party.

On July 11, a party asset of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was held. Beria, who had just been arrested, was exposed by the secretary of the Central Committee, Nikolai Shatalin, who was temporarily appointed concurrently as First Deputy Minister of the Interior. Restrained and rather dry, he was in charge of personnel affairs in the Central Committee on behalf of Malenkov. Party meetings were held in all departments and departments of the ministry. Everyone unanimously denounced the recent boss. But not at all for the torture and execution of innocent people!

On the contrary, the Chekists demanded the resumption of the "doctors' case" and other operational and investigative cases stopped by Beria. Arrest those who were released after Stalin's death. Speakers at the meeting at the Main Directorate of Counterintelligence said ardently that "the hostile activity of doctors has been proven, and they made a proposal - to ask the leadership of the ministry to reconsider the decision to release them."

They complained about the deputy head of the 5th Directorate, Major General Boris Petrovich Trofimov. What caused discontent with the general, who served all his life in the state security apparatus, the recent deputy head of the Gulag?

"When considering cases against Jewish nationalists, he tried to justify their hostile actions by some kind of general situation allegedly created in the country," his colleagues complained about him. - An illiterate person, lagged behind the KGB work, in the presence of a number of comrades called Trotsky a great "orator", "organizer". Being at the turnout with the agent, I told him that in the USSR there was allegedly a regime of oppression of Jews.

One of the investigators of the 1st Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs turned to the Central Committee:

"We, small ordinary workers, were confused when we were told: "this is a turn in the punitive policy", "we cannot keep the intelligentsia in prisons", "the release of doctors is a matter of big politics". Many doubted, but did not dare to complain about the wrongness of these actions, partly fearing for themselves, and partly believed that there was no one to go to, since Beria was considered "the second person in the government."

After the release of the doctors, the leading newspaper Pravda stated that Mikhoels had been slandered. Actually it is not. There were serious intelligence and investigative materials on him, testifying to his enemy activities against the Soviet state. The medical service department has been reduced to a department of no more than ten people for the entire Soviet Union. In the same way, the development department was reduced

Jewish bourgeois nationalists. And in general, a line was drawn, as if the Jews were not conducting enemy work.

At the same time, the Chekists complained about difficult material conditions: "All benefits have been cancelled. Within only one year, they were deprived of payments for the rank, rations (under Comrade Ignatiev) and payments for secrecy (under Beria). All employees only live with the thought of when these benefits will be returned back. Before the war, we had a solid seniority pay - after 12 years - 50 percent. Why not restore it?"

The state security apparatus had no doubt that the country's policy would return to Stalin's times. But this did not happen, because Khrushchev came to power, and the party apparatus throughout the country breathed a sigh of relief.

In the editorial of Pravda under the title "Indestructible Unity of the Party, Government, Soviet people" said:

"Any worker, no matter what post he holds, must be under the unrelenting control of the Party. Party organizations must regularly check the work of all organizations and departments, the activities of all leading workers. It is necessary, among other things, to take the activities of the Ministry of the Interior under systematic and unrelenting control."

Party secretaries were afraid not only of Beria, they were afraid of state security officers who did not hide the fact that they were watching the party leadership. The Chekists were on an equal footing with the secretaries, they did not recognize party power over themselves. Neither the first secretary of the regional committee, nor the secretary of the Central Committee of the republic were guaranteed against sudden arrest. They understood that they were being watched, but they could not know what exactly the head of the regional administration or the republican minister was reporting to Moscow. After the execution of Beria, everything changed. The state security was subordinated to the parties. The party apparatus played a decisive role in the struggle for power.

And what is the fate of the dossier on top management, which was carefully collected at the Lubyanka?

Six months after the execution of Beria, Khrushchev created the State Security Committee, and put Colonel General Ivan Serov at the head, whom he knew from pre-war times and whom he trusted. Serov transferred the most important Beria files from the KGB to the Central Committee building so that none of the Chekists would look into them. Khrushchev assures that he did not read these dossiers. But Serov read. After that, the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee agreed to destroy everything. There were eleven large paper bags.

True, some documents have been preserved, and it can be assumed what exactly was stored in those dossiers. After the trip of a member of the Politburo around the country, a report was received by the state security. Everything was described in it, including such intimate details that could easily become a reason for dismissal from work. Party leaders are also people: away from the family and the watchful eye of colleagues, they, having relaxed, allowed themselves something, and the security officers carefully recorded everything and reported to the authorities.

When the comrades were already getting rid of Malenkov, the topic of the Beria dossier surfaced.

In 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee instructed Shatalin to find out exactly what documents Beria kept. The safes of Beria and Kobulov at the Ministry of Internal Affairs were opened by the Prosecutor General of the USSR Rudenko. His subordinates rewrote all the documents and handed them over to the archive. Nobody had any questions.

On July 1, a representative of the prosecutor's office and two employees of the Central Committee opened Beria's safe in his Kremlin office. Checked the desk drawers and bookcases. They reported to Shatalin: "Documents, books and items of importance for the case were handed over in packaged form to Comrade D.N. Sukhanov."

Dmitry Sukhanov was in charge of Malenkov's office, he was not liked in the apparatus and in 1956 they planted, after which they began to find out the fate of Beria's papers.

The head of the department of administrative bodies of the Central Committee, Afanasy Lukyanovich Dedov, said that Yezhov's handwritten testimony was found among the documents from Beria's safe.

about the role of Malenkov in the big purge. Yezhov wrote this when he had already been removed from the post of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs and he was awaiting arrest.

Dedov read Yezhov's testimony. I gave it to Shatalin. Shatalin called Sukhanov, explained what he had in his hands. He said:

- Okay, send it.

I asked the boss:

How to deal with these documents?

Malenkov shrugged his shoulders.

- Yes, everyone knows about it.

Sukhanov recalled that the members of the Central Committee Presidium agreed on behalf of all get rid of compromising materials, and suggested:

Maybe destroy it?

Malenkov decided differently:

- How will you destroy it there, let me take them with me.

No one else saw Yezhov's testimony

On June 28, in the cell, Beria wrote a note addressed to Malenkov. He obviously hasn't realized what had happened and what awaited him:

"Dear George!

I was sure that from that big criticism at the presidium I would draw all the necessary conclusions for myself and be useful in the team. But the Central Committee decided otherwise, I think that the Central Committee acted correctly. I consider it necessary to say that I was always infinitely devoted to the party of Lenin - Stalin - to my homeland ... Working in Georgia, in the Transcaucasus, in Moscow - the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and again in the Ministry of Internal Affairs - I gave everything I could to work. I tried to select cadres according to business qualities, comrades of principle, devoted to our pa

I ask comrades Malenkov Georgy, Molotov Vyacheslav, Voroshilov Klementy, Khrushchev Nikita, Kaganovich Lazar, Bulganin Nikolai, Mikoyan Anastas and others - let them forgive, if anything happened during these fifteen years of great and intense joint work. Dear comrades, I wish you all great success for the cause of Lenin and Stalin, for the unity and solidity of our Party, for the flourishing of our Glorious Motherland.

George, please, if you consider it possible, the family (wife and old mother) and son Sergo, whom you know, do not leave without attention.

I might as well not ask. Have not left. The son was arrested immediately after Lavrenty Pavlovich. Then all relatives will be evicted far away.

Nina Teimurazovna Beria wrote a letter to Khrushchev in despair:

"On the twenty-sixth of this month, at about 12 o'clock in the morning, my son and his family were taken away (a pregnant wife in the seventh month and two children - one is five years old, the other is two and a half), and since then I don't know where they are! I do not have anyone. I do not know what to do. If I remain in this ignorance for another three days, I will go mad. I beg you, call me, ask me something, tell me something!

I ask you to allow me to share the fate of Lavrenty Pavlovich, whatever it may be. I am devoted to him, I believe him as a communist, despite all sorts of small rough edges in our married life - I love him. I will never believe in his conscious malice towards the party, I will not believe in his betrayal of Leninist-Stalinist ideas and principles. I will only forgive to spare my son Sergei.

Sergo Beria married Marfa Maksimovna Peshkova, Gorky's granddaughter.

Korney Ivanovich Chukovsky wrote in his diary on July 12, 1953: "I remember the son of Beria - handsome, like porcelain, sleek, silent, arrogant, calm; I saw him on March 29 at Nadezhda Alekseevna Peshkova's. What now with his arrogance, sleekness, calmness? Where is he? Martha is said to be pregnant. wild fate at the Gorky house - from Yagoda to Beria - why are they so attracted to the gepeushniks of such a - corrupted - way of thinking, to careerists, degenerates, mazuriks?

Beria's wife was also arrested in early July 1953. At the end of November 1954

The Presidium of the Central Committee decided the fate of Beria's son and widow: they were sent to an administrative settlement. Sergo Lavrentievich Beria lost his last name: all documents were taken away from him and new ones were issued to his mother's last name. He was deprived of his scientific title, he had to start his life anew.

Sergo Beria was engaged in the Moscow missile defense system. He was undoubtedly a gifted man, although his father's formidable name played a decisive role in his meteoric career. In his former design bureau, they told how he gathered representatives of factories, asked when they would supply the necessary equipment. Everyone complained about a bunch of problems, explained how difficult it was to fulfill the order. Sergo called the secretary and, as if by the way, asked:

- Connect with Lavrenty Pavlovich.

The frightened representative of the plant jumped up:

- No need to call Lavrenty Pavlovich! I now realized that we can do everything even faster! ..

On July 1, 1953, Beria wrote another letter. Expanded this time. On reflection, he began to apologize and repent to his comrades. He addressed Malenkov personally, believing that his fate was in the hands of Georgy Maximilianovich: "We worked together, honestly, in a party way for many years, and the hard and formidable military, during the recovery period of our country. Everything valuable in my life is associated with working with you ... I always had a need to consult with you, and it always turned out better for me. I saw in you a senior, experienced party leader on a large scale, talented, energetic and tireless, a wonderful friend and comrade ... For over ten years we have been real Bolshevik friends, and no one has upset our friendship, which is so valuable and necessary for me.

He still did not realize what was in store for him: "Dear comrades, I am a faithful son of our Motherland, a faithful son of the Lenin-Stalin party and your faithful friend and comrade. Wherever you want, for any job, the smallest, send, take a closer look, I can still work faithfully for ten years and I will work with all my heart and with all my energy ... I beg you, do not deprive me of being an active builder on any small plot of our glorious Motherland, and you will be convinced that in two or three years I will be strongly corrected and will be more useful."

He was in a cell without a window. The light in it did not turn off even at night. An officer was inseparably next to Beria, who was ordered to kill him if someone tried to attack. The Presidium of the Central Committee was still afraid that they would want to release him. Beria confidently told this officer that he was not guilty of anything and that he would soon be released. He did not believe that his comrades would treat him the way he treated others.

When Beria reminded Malenkov and Khrushchev about how he defended them from Stalin, they took away his paper, pince-nez and pencil. God forbid, he writes something from what he says about them knows...

Beria was kept in the guardhouse for a week. On the night of July 2-3, he was transferred to the headquarters of the air defense district, where he was placed in an underground bunker. There he remained until his death.

From July 2 to July 7, 1953, the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU met in the Kremlin. They spoke exclusively about Beria. The register of accusations brought at the plenum looks somewhat parodic. Everything that Beria was then angrily blamed for would later be considered his merit: the fight against the omnipotence of the party apparatus, amnesty and mitigation of criminal legislation, indulgences for the peasantry, and reduction of unnecessary expenses.

Former member of the Politburo Andrei Andreevich Andreev:

- He began to discredit the name of Comrade Stalin, to cast a shadow on the greatest man after Lenin ... I have no doubt that under his pressure, soon after the death of Comrade Stalin, the mention of Comrade Stalin suddenly disappears from the press ... The question of the personality cult appeared from somewhere.

Minister of Metallurgical Industry Ivan Fedorovich Tevosyan:

- This bastard Beria objected to the fact that, speaking about the doctrine that guides our party, along with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin, the name of Comrade Stalin is mentioned. That's what this bastard has come to.

First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine Oleksiy Illarionovich Kirichenko:

- In Beria's note, it is not clear why such terms appear: "Western Ukrainian intelligentsia", "Western Ukrainian cadres", "Russification" ... And this is at a time when these words have long fallen out of use in Ukraine. The Ukrainian and Soviet people are one family, and there are no Western Ukrainians and Eastern Ukrainians in it.

At the plenum, of course, there was also a broader and more important conversation for the country.

"Let's take a look," Nikita Khrushchev addressed the members of the Central Committee, "what conspiracies within our country were opened by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of State Security? With the exception of fake, exaggerated - none.

- That's right, - Marshal Voroshilov supported him, - none.

- We all know, - continued Khrushchev, - before 1937 and after 1937 - more half a linden.

- That's right, - again supported him from the presidium.

- If we now analyze the archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, I am convinced that 80 percent of the population has questionnaires from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they develop a case for each.

Sympathetic laughter in the hall.

- But there is no milk, there is little meat. They announced the transition from socialism to communism, but no flour sell.

Voice from the presidium:

- There are no potatoes.

- We have reduced the prices for potatoes and cabbage, but there are no potatoes and cabbage in the store. Has cabbage become more expensive or at the same price as bananas? What, our collective farmers have forgotten how to grow cabbage?

For the first time there was a condemnation of Stalin and Stalinism. In his concluding remarks, Malenkov said:

"You must know, comrades, that the personality cult of Stalin took painful forms and dimensions in the daily practice of leadership, the methods of collectivity in work were discarded, criticism and self-criticism were completely absent in our highest echelon of leadership. We have no right to hide from you that such an ugly cult of personality has led to peremptory individual decisions and in recent years has begun to cause serious damage to the leadership of the Party and the country.

But all the words spoken at the plenum remained a secret for the country. Nothing has been published. A few days later, a short message appeared in the newspapers, in a few lines, that the plenum of the Central Committee had expelled Beria from the party as an enemy of the Communist Party and the Soviet people. And the Presidium of the Supreme Council referred the case of Beria's criminal actions to the Supreme Court. A ditty went for a walk around the country:

Beria, Beria
Out of trust
And Comrade Malenkov
Gave him kicks.

Many also believed that Beria was a spy. And in one second everyone agreed that he was a scoundrel and a criminal. The inertia of Stalin's times worked, when they had no doubts: if they arrested, then they were guilty.

After the arrest of Beria, a nationwide condemnation of his activities was organized. No one really knew anything, but they acted as they used to act: it was ordered to condemn - we are significant, we will condemn. An article signed by Mikhail appeared in Literaturnaya Gazeta

Alexandrovich Sholokhov "The name of the traitor is cursed and will be forgotten", placed along with other responses under the heading "The people sweep away all who stand in their way."

Subscribers to the Great Soviet Encyclopedia received envelopes with freshly printed pages, which were supposed to be pasted into the fifth volume instead of pages 21-23, where there was an article about Beria. He should have disappeared from history.

Consequence. Court. Sentence. Execution

The Presidium of the Supreme Council deprived Beria of the powers of a deputy, removed him from his post as deputy head of government and minister of the interior, and took away all titles and awards. But no one gave an arrest warrant, a sanction for detention.

The Presidium of the Central Committee adopted a resolution "On the organization of the investigation into the criminal, anti-party and anti-state actions of Beria." The former Prosecutor General of the USSR Grigory Nikolaevich Safonov was removed. A new one was appointed - Roman Andreevich Rudenko. He was the chief prosecutor from the USSR at the Nuremberg Trials of the main Nazi war criminals, worked as a prosecutor in Ukraine, and Khrushchev trusted him.

Rudenko was ordered to form an investigative team within 24 hours. But the investigation was not easy. They did not know what to accuse the main prisoner of. There was no shortage of epithets: insolent, adventurer, intriguer, provocateur! But they don't get jailed for it. Members of the Presidium of the Central Committee demanded that Beria be judged for anti-party activities. Prosecutor Rudenko had to explain that there was no such article in the Criminal Code. Then punish for anti-state activities! But for which one?

Beria was guilty of mass repressions, but the leaders were afraid of this topic like the devil incense. Just in case, he was accused of rape, which in any case made it possible to shoot Beria by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of January 4, 1949 "On strengthening the criminal liability for rape." This is what they always did in the Ministry of State Security: they brought charges under several articles at once. One will break, the other will remain.

Once upon a time, his predecessor as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov, was accused of homosexuality. The secretary of the Central Committee, Shatalin, told the higher officials about Beria's connections with women. Right at the plenum, the Central Committee abundantly quoted the testimony of Beria's security chief, Colonel Sarkisov: "I know of Beria's numerous connections with all sorts of random women ... Beria cohabited with Maya, a student at the Institute of Foreign Languages. Subsequently, she became pregnant by Beria and had an abortion. Beria also cohabited with an 18-20 year old girl Lyalya. From Beria she had a child, with whom she now lives in the former dacha of Obruchnikov. On Beria's instructions, I kept a special list of women with whom he cohabited. (Laughter in the hall.) Subsequently, at his suggestion, I destroyed this list. However, I kept one list. This list contains the last names, first names, addresses and phone numbers of more than 25 such women. A year or a year and a half ago, I knew for sure that as a result of Beria's connections with prostitutes, he was ill with syphilis. He was treated by a doctor at the polyclinic of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

During interrogation, Colonel Sarkisov described how it all happened: "Walking around his house, Beria noticed some woman that interested him. In this case, he sent me, Nadaray or security officers to find out her last name, first name, address or phone number. I followed such a woman and tried to talk with her ... I spoke to such a woman who was interested in her, and asked if she wanted to convey something ... On his instructions, either I went for her myself, or sent his car ... Women to the apartment they were brought to Beria, as a rule, at night.

In February 1959, Colonel Rafael Semenovitch Sarkisov will also be put on the dock. He will get ten years. A year later, he will be released on parole.

There were many rumors about Beria's alcove stories. Nami Mikoyan, the daughter-in-law of Anastas Mikoyan, who knew Beria, recalls:

"Somewhere in the late 40s - early 50s in Moscow, among numerous secret novels, Beria had a connection with a young girl - the beautiful Lyalya. She gave birth to a daughter, and Beria gave the girl the name of his mother. Later, little Marta, having become an adult and beautiful, in the 70s married the son of Grishin, a member of the Politburo of the Brezhnev era.

Beria himself was interrogated.

He did not understand why he was asked:

- I easily converged with women, had numerous connections, short-lived. These women were brought to my house, I never visited them. They delivered them to me at the house of the Sarkis and Nadara. There were cases when, having noticed this or that woman who I liked from the car, I sent Sarkisov or Nadarai to follow and establish her address, get to know her and, if desired, deliver her to my house.

Prosecutor Rudenko:

- You are presented with nine lists in which 62 women appear. Are these lists of your cohabitants?

- Most of the women who appear on these lists are my cohabitants, with whom I had brief ties. These lists have been compiled over the years...

- Did you have syphilis?

- I was ill with syphilis during the war, I think in 1943, and was treated.

During the investigation into the Beria case, it was revealed that the vicissitudes of his personal life seemed like childish pranks.

In April 1948, operatives from the Ministry of State Security staged a whole show with the newly appointed Minister of the Navy, Alexander Alexandrovich Afanasyev. On the one hand, Stalin signed the decision on his appointment as a union minister, and on the other hand, he gave sanction for its development.

In the morning Afanasiev went to work. Suddenly his ZIS-110 stopped because the tires were punctured. He decided to walk to work. Another car stopped nearby. Some people jumped out of there, twisted the minister and took him away. They blindfolded him and took him to the safe house of the MGB (which he did not suspect) and said:

We know that you work for British intelligence. We want you to work also for us, for American intelligence.

Afanasyev was blindfolded and taken out of the house and released near the Moscow City Council. Afanasiev immediately asked for an appointment with Stalin. Beria received it. After listening, he called Abakumov and ordered to come to him. For the sake of appearance, Lavrenty Pavlovich scolded the Minister of State Security:

What kind of minister are you? What are you doing? American intelligence officers have become so insolent that people are being grabbed on the streets. They seized Afanasiev and forced him to carry out espionage work.

Beria ordered Abakumov to find the American intelligence agents who had kidnapped Afanasyev. A few days later, the Minister of State Security "searched" the MGB officer who posed as an American intelligence officer. At Lubyanka, a confrontation was held between the minister and an imaginary "American", who, on the instructions of his superiors, said that Afanasiev, being the captain of a merchant ship, agreed to work for the British back in 1933 ... On April 26, the minister was arrested. MGB investigators beat Afanasiev to make him sign the testimony they needed. They bullied him for a year. On May 14, 1949, a special meeting under the Ministry of State Security sentenced him to twenty years of corrective labor.

The operation was organized by the head of the 2nd Main Directorate (counterintelligence) of the MGB, Major General Yevgeny Pitovranov. The American intelligence officer was portrayed by one of his subordinates - the deputy head of the 7th department of the 2nd head office, Colonel Sholom Samoilovich Shluger. He was not lucky. When, under Ignatiev, from the state security apparatus

they began to purge the Jews, he was also arrested.

But he spent only two months in custody. After Stalin's death, the colonel, like many others, was released. His wife, wishing to thank Beria, found a convenient occasion and sent a telegram to the new minister:

"Dear Lavrenty Pavlovich!

Happy birthday to you. I wish you health and fruitful work for the benefit of our Motherland.

Ludmila Shluger .

Her husband was reinstated in the service and sent on a business trip to Hungary, and Lyudmila Dmitrievna received an unexpected call from the Ministry of the Interior and was told that a car would be sent for her and taken to Lubyanka. But Pobeda delivered her straight to Beria's mansion. Lavrenty Pavlovich asked:

Did you send a telegram? I decided to thank you.

What happened next, she outlined during the investigation: "He invited me to the dining room. There was no one else besides the two of us. At dinner, Beria treated me to wine, drank to my health, to the health of my daughter. After dinner, Beria took me into the bedroom, sat me on the edge of the bed and began to hug me. I asked them not to touch me, but Beria said that philosophy was useless here, and took possession of me. I was afraid to resist him, because I was afraid that Beria might again imprison my husband. Only a scoundrel can take advantage of the dependent position of the wife of a subordinate, and even recently released from custody.

Some historians proceed from the fact that Beria is no more to blame for the repressions than the rest of the members of the Politburo - from Molotov to Khrushchev. Lavrenty Pavlovich came to the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs at the end of 1938, when the peak of repression had already passed, and with his arrival, some of the arrested were released. But in the summer of 1953, he lost in the political struggle, and he was turned into a scapegoat ...

In reality, he was a man with a criminal mindset without the slightest moral restrictions. From a young age he became a criminal - he ordered to kill and torture people, he believed that torture was in the order of things.

The investigators interrogated the head of his reception room, Fyodor Vasilyevich Mukhanov. He worked for many years as the personal secretary of Lavrenty Pavlovich and said: "In the reception room of Beria, in the desk in the right bedside table, rubber sticks and some objects for beating were kept wrapped in newspapers. Sometimes Bogdan Kobulov, Vlodzimirsky and others brought the arrested person to Beria's office and carried away the equipment for beatings. After some time, the screams and cries of the arrested person were heard in the reception room.

The investigators were looking for a suitable explanation for the crimes of Beria and his team. It was impossible to say that such was the system created by the Soviet government, and Beria and his people were part of it. Recognize that he acted in exactly the same way as everyone else who voluntarily worked in the repressive apparatus.

They came up with an explanation. And it suited everyone. Beria was an agent of foreign intelligence, because he killed Soviet people. In general, he was going to overthrow the Soviet government.

Rudenko demanded from him during interrogation:

- Admit that, having become an agent of British intelligence during the Civil War, you served British imperialism for all subsequent years, right up to your exposure and arrest! That you were the organizer of a group of conspirators who committed the gravest crimes, including terrorist murders in the name of your criminal counter-revolutionary goals! That you acted as an enemy of the Party and the people in your criminal counter-revolutionary plans to seize power and liquidate the Soviet system!

Proving this version was difficult even for experienced investigators. came up with incredible designs.

On July 27, during interrogation, Rudenko asked Beria:

- Do you know such a name - Kapiton Kvaratskhelia?
- Known.
- Who is he?

- Kapiton Kvaratskhelia is my mother's brother. In 1915 he left for Harbin, lived in Manchuria until about 1926-1927, after which he returned to Tbilisi and lived with our family for several months. Then he again went to Manchuria. I can't remember when, but a few years later he returned to Tbilisi.

– And why didn't you prevent him from going abroad in 1926, being the chairman of the GPU of Georgia?

I didn't doubt his honesty. He formalized his travel abroad.

– Do you know that Kvaratskhelia maintained a station buffet in Harbin, was repeatedly called to the gendarmerie to inform about the visitors who visit the buffet?

- I didn't know about it.

During the interrogation on August 7, they returned to this topic:

- At the last interrogation, you did not say that with your assistance your niece, the daughter of Kapiton Kvaratskhelia Susanna, arrived from abroad with her husband Kozlyakovsky Peter, who at first lived in your apartment in Tbilisi. Do you confirm this?

I confirm that I have arrived. I did not provide any assistance to them.

- You knew that Pyotr Kozlyakovsky was a white officer in the past, and his wife Was Susanna connected to Japanese intelligence?

- No.

- Did Kobulov report materials on Susanna Kvaratskhelia that testified that she was connected abroad with fascist white émigré organizations and Japanese intelligence officers?

- No.

- You are presented with a copy of the certificate, compiled in April 1938 by the apparatus of the NKVD of the Georgian SSR, from which it is clear that Susanna Kvaratskhelia was included in the list of persons to be arrested. Why wasn't she arrested? Do you know that Kobulov was instructed to refrain from special measures?

- I didn't know that.

This is how a system was built to prove the cooperation of one of the recent leaders of the state with foreign intelligence services. Through the manager of a station canteen in the Chinese city of Harbin...

Marshal Semyon Budyonny recalled an old grudge against Beria, who in 1942, seeing his complete incompetence, advised Stalin not to appoint a former cavalryman as commander of the Transcaucasian Front. Budyonny wrote to Minister of Defense Bulganin: "Beria's actions in relation to the front and personally to me were certainly wrecking, and he tried with all his might to let the Germans through to the Black Sea coast. I think that Beria, as an enemy of our Motherland, was in collusion with his masters about the capture of Transcaucasia by the English army.

Such an accusation will be brought against Beria: in 1942, when he was the representative of the Headquarters on the Transcaucasian Front, he tried to open passes through the Main Caucasian Range in order to let enemy troops into Georgia ...

Beria and his people were also charged with the fact that they tried to "activate the remnants of bourgeois-nationalist elements in the union republics, sow enmity and discord between the peoples of the USSR and, first of all, undermine the friendship of the peoples of the USSR with the great Russian people." And Beria also sabotaged the most important measures aimed at raising the economy of collective farms and state farms and steadily improving the well-being of the Soviet people ...

The verdict stated: "Personally, the court considers proven guilt

Defendant Beria of treason to the Motherland, organizing an anti-Soviet conspiratorial group in order to seize power and establish the rule of the bourgeoisie, to commit terrorist acts against politicians loyal to the Communist Party and the people, to actively fight against the revolutionary workers' movement in Baku in 1919, when Beria was on the secret agent position in the counterintelligence of the counterrevolutionary Musavat government in Azerbaijan and was associated with foreign intelligence until the moment of exposure and arrest.

Together with Beria, his long-term employees sat in the dock:

Vsevolod Nikolaevich Merkulov - former Minister of State Security, recently Minister of State Control of the USSR, Army General;

Vladimir Georgievich Dekanozov - Former Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia;

Bogdan Zakharovich Kobulov - former First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, colonel general;

Sergei Arsenievich Goglidze - former First Deputy Minister of State Security, recently the head of the department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR, Colonel General;

Pavel Yakovlevich Meshik - former Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, lieutenant general;

Lev Emelyanovich Vlodzimirsky - former head of the investigative unit for special important affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR, lieutenant general.

Why were these six selected?

Lavrenty Pavlovich once brought Merkulov closer not only because he was good at writing (in 1922 he drew attention to his article in the departmental collection "Chekists on May 1st"), but also because in his KGB environment he was the only Russian. For the same reason, in 1953, he sat next to Beria. Otherwise it turned out that the Georgians were judged. During the investigation, this motive arose constantly.

Former Chief of the General Staff, General Sergei Shtemenko, interrogated as witness, felt it his duty to say:

- It was very noticeable that Beria was focusing on the Georgians, and not just on the Georgians, but on the Georgians from the NKVD. Thus, we can conclude that Beria did not trust the Russians and, first of all, sought to rely on the NKVD officers - Georgians by nationality.

On December 10, 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee adopted a resolution "On the consideration of the case on charges of Beria and his accomplices." The case was heard in a closed court session according to the law of December 1, 1934, that is, without a prosecutor and without a lawyer, in an accelerated manner, which was introduced by Stalin the day after the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov. The charge was brought under the infamous Article 58 of the Criminal Code. The Presidium of the Central Committee approved the text of the indictment and secretly sent it to the party organizations.

The special judicial presence of the Supreme Court of the USSR, which decided the fate of Beria and his employees, consisted of Marshal Ivan Stepanovich Konev, Chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions Nikolai Mikhailovich Shvernik, General of the Army Kirill Semenovitch Moskalenko (he became commander of the troops of the Moscow Military District), Secretary of the Moscow Regional Committee Nikolai Aleksandrovich Mikhailov (after Stalin's death, he lost the high position of a member of the presidium and secretary of the Central Committee), chairman of the Georgian trade unions Mitrofan Ionovich Kuchava (a recent party worker), First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Konstantin Fedorovich Lunev (a party worker thrown to strengthen the organs) and two lawyers - the first deputy chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR, Lieutenant General of Justice Yevlampy Lavrovich Zeidin (he presided over military tribunals throughout his career) and Chairman of the Moscow City Court Leonid Abramovich Gromov (son of a peasant from the Pskov province, he secretary in the Komsomol, first became a judge and only then entered the Leningrad Legal institute).

The Special Judicial Presence met from 18 to 23 December. All the accused

found guilty of treason to the Motherland, of organizing an anti-Soviet conspiratorial group with the aim of seizing power, of committing terrorist acts: "Defendants Beria L.P., Merkulov V.N., Dekanozov V.G., Kobulov B.Z., Goglidze exposed by evidence S.A., Meshik P.Ya. and Vlodzimirsky L.E. in the presence of the court, they confirmed the testimony given by them during the preliminary investigation, and pleaded guilty to committing a number of grave state crimes.

On December 22, articles and speeches by noble people of the country appeared in the newspapers demanding that Beria and his accomplices be severely punished under the general heading "There is no mercy for traitors to the Motherland!"

At the evening meeting, the defendants were given the last word. They are next to nothing
They did not deny, they only asked for indulgence.

Goglidze:

- I carried out all the instructions of Beria, as a result of which innocent people were shot. So, I was not at the height of my position, I was not able to understand the situation. I plead guilty to having participated in the repressions in 1937-1938, when many innocent people suffered as a result of the use of illegal methods of investigation against those arrested and beatings. However, I acted without counter-revolutionary intent, but blindly obeying the criminal orders of Beria. I ask you to change the qualification of my criminal actions to articles on malfeasance.

Kobulov:

- My misfortune is that earlier I took Beria for an honest person and unconditionally carried out his criminal orders. Therefore, I must answer to the court, but at the time when I received his instructions, I did not think that they were criminal. I blindly trusted Beria, who occupied a special position in the state. I ask the court to reclassify my accusation from articles on counter-revolutionary crimes to other articles that I deserve.

Dekanozov:

- I have committed some crimes, but they are not counter-revolutionary crimes ... I admit the facts of my moral decay. When questions related to my moral character were investigated, I looked very bad, and although some facts are exaggerated, I also consider what I have done to be completely unacceptable. Please take into account that I did not commit counter-revolutionary crimes, and condemn me under other articles of the Criminal Code.

Vlodzimir:

- The fact that crimes were committed in the NKVD, and then in the MGB and MVUD, I learned only when I got acquainted with the case. Once again I declare that I was not a close friend of Beria. I confirm that I participated in the beatings of those arrested, but, in doing so, I believed that Beria gave orders for the beatings, having previously coordinated them. Once again I ask the court to objectively evaluate all the evidence collected against me and change the qualification of my accusation.

Meshik:

- I plead guilty to being an accomplice of a number of Beria's crimes, not knowing that he is an enemy. I want to be given the most severe punishment with this wording. I do not want leniency, but judge me for what I am guilty of. However, I do not plead guilty to crimes while working in Ukraine. I have a family, and I ask the court that the verdict does not affect my family.

Merkulov:

- I am now ashamed of my closeness to Beria. I did a lot for him, helped him, but I thought that Beria was an honest man. I ask one thing - to remove counter-revolutionary articles from me and judge me under other articles of the Criminal Code.

Beria:

- I hid my service in the Musavatist counter-revolutionary intelligence for a long time.

However, even while serving there, he did nothing harmful. I fully acknowledge my moral decay. Numerous connections with women dishonor me as a citizen and as a former member of the party. I admit that I am responsible for the excesses and perversions of socialist legality in 1937-1938, but please take into account that I had no counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet goals ... Please do not consider me as a counter-revolutionary, but apply to me those articles of the Criminal Code that I really deserve .

On December 23, at 13:30, the court retired for a deliberation to pronounce the verdict. At 6:45 p.m., the chairman of the Special Judicial Presence, Marshal Konev, proceeded to pronounce the verdict. All were found guilty, all were sentenced to death.

A few hours after the trial, Beria was expelled. We were in a hurry. The verdict was carried out by the commandant of the Special Judicial Presence, Pavel Fedorovich Batitsky, who had already been promoted to colonel general. Then the officers accompanying Batitsky also shot at Beria, already dead. A professional firing squad was not invited: the fewer witnesses, the better.

Professor Vladimir Naumov:

- Batitsky wrote a note to Khrushchev that they shot Beria right on the stairs. This is an unthinkable thing. In a concrete bunker, where there are small rooms, they could shoot each other. Batitsky wrote this to reassure Khrushchev: Beria did not have time to tell anything, he left after the trial, and he was immediately shot. In fact, they brought boards, sheathed the room so that the bullets would get stuck in them.

Beria was allowed to change into clean linen, and a black suit was brought to him from home. They put handcuffs on their hands. As if he behaved with dignity, did not cry and did not ask for anything. Beria's body was taken to the Donskoy crematorium and burned. The ashes were scattered.

Batitsky became a marshal, commander-in-chief of the country's air defense and deputy minister of defense. In 1965 he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The rest of the officers Aleksey Ivanovich Baksov (later Colonel General), Ivan Grigorievich Zub (later Major General), Viktor Ivanovich Yuferev (later Colonel) - were awarded the Order of the Red Banner in January 1954. They say they counted on the "Golden Stars" of the Hero of the Soviet Union. In any case, the work was performed with soul and felt like heroes.

The court was closed, and this caused various rumors regarding the fate of Beria. Some claimed that he was killed in a shootout on the day of his arrest. And his double was brought to trial ... Others, on the contrary, argued that Beria was given the opportunity to flee the country. Well-wishers explained to Beria's son that loyal people took Lavrenty Pavlovich to Argentina, and they even showed a photograph that supposedly depicted the former head of the Soviet state security in Buenos Aires.

On the same day, December 23, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Lunev and Deputy Chief Military Prosecutor Major General Dmitry Ivanovich Kitaev carried out the sentence handed down to Bogdan Kobulov, Vsevolod Merkulov, Pavel Meshik, Lev Vlodzimirsky, Sergei Goglidze.

The next day, Pravda published a message "In the Supreme Court of the USSR":

"The Special Judicial Presence of the Supreme Court of the USSR ruled:

To sentence Beria L.P., Merkulov V.N., Dekanozov V.G., Kobulov B.Z., Goglidze S.A., Meshik P.Ya., Vlodzimirsky L.E. to the highest measure of criminal instruction - execution with confiscation of property belonging to them personally, with the deprivation of military ranks and awards. The verdict is final and not subject to appeal. Yesterday, December 23, the verdict of the Special Judicial Presence was carried out."

All over the country the working people expressed their deep satisfaction with the fair verdict - "The will of the people is done!".

Conducted several more trials of former employees of the authorities

state security. Former Deputy Minister of State Security for investigation Mikhail Ryumin was kept in Lefortovo - he was called "arrested No. 5". The death sentence was pronounced on July 7, 1954.

On July 23, Pravda reported:

"Ryumin, acting as a hidden enemy of the Soviet state, for careerist and adventurous purposes, embarked on the path of falsifying investigative materials, on the basis of which provocative cases were created and unjustified arrests of a number of Soviet citizens, including prominent figures in medicine ... Given the particular danger of Ryumin's wrecking activities and the severity of the consequences of the crimes he committed, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court sentenced Ryumin to capital punishment - execution. The sentence has been carried out."

Beria managed to release many Chekists personally known to him, who were arrested after Abakumov. But Colonel General Abakumov himself continued to sit. The indictment has been revised. At the direction of Beria, the former minister was accused of fabricating the "Mingrelian case" (when the leaders of Georgia were imprisoned) and the aviation case (when Malenkov suffered).

After the arrest of Beria, the materials of the investigation were again rewritten. Abakumov was accused of being friends with Beria and destroying party cadres. If Ryumin, who had been shot by that time, accused Abakumov of covering for Kuznetsov, Voznesensky and other people from Leningrad, now Abakumov had to answer for their execution.

"The trial of Abakumov," Khrushchev said, "should have been organized here, in Leningrad. I'll tell you: the only thing holding us back is that this scoundrel will make many references to Comrade Stalin. This is a little holding back, otherwise this scoundrel should have been tried here ... When we got the opportunity after Beria's arrest to sort out the affairs of the MGB, it turned out that Abakumov should be burned at the stake. This is a hardened criminal, a conspirator.

And yet, the trial of Abakumov and his former subordinates opened on December 14 1954 in Leningrad in the district House of Officers.

"The enemy of the people, Abakumov," prosecutor Roman Rudenko said at the trial, "undoubtedly, he sought to get through with the help of the traitor to the Motherland Beria to the leadership in the country. It is no coincidence that Abakumov's inner circle spread rumors that Abakumov would soon join the Politburo.

Abakumov pleaded not guilty:

"The case against me was fabricated. I was taken into custody as a result of the intrigues of Beria and the false denunciation of Ryumin, I have been in prison for three years, in the most difficult conditions. I was beaten ... All the shortcomings in the organs of the Cheka, accumulated over a long period, are charged to me as crimes. I didn't do anything myself. Instructions were given in the Central Committee, and I performed.

Years will pass, and books about Viktor Semenovich Abakumov will appear, almost all of them are benevolent. They tirelessly sing of Smersh's successes in the fight against German agents. The trial of Abakumov - under Khrushchev - does not seem like a triumph of justice. Arrested for one thing, accused of another, shot for a third. In the KGB environment, Abakumov is obviously sympathetic. A good man, in essence, a war hero, became a victim of political intrigues ... It was absurd, of course, to accuse Abakumov of being an accomplice in Beria's criminal group. Lavrenty Pavlovich despised him. Abakumov hated and feared Beria.

Abakumov faithfully served Stalin and zealously fulfilled his official duties. Orders and duties were criminal. On July 5, 1952, Abakumov reported to the leader about the order in the Ministry of State Security entrusted to him: "I must say frankly that they really often beat arrested spies, saboteurs, terrorists in order to force them to tell about their criminal deeds and connections. But this is done wisely and only with the sanction of the Minister of State Security and his first deputy, and in local bodies - with the sanction of the head of the body. On this account, we had the permission of the Central Committee.

Abakumov committed grave crimes against his own people and army, sent innocent people to their deaths. But they did not want to say this then, and many do not want to admit it to this day. He was called guilty of treason, sabotage, terrorist attacks, participation in a counter-revolutionary organization. They shot him on December 19, 1954, literally an hour after the verdict was passed, without giving him the opportunity to ask for pardon. According to the head of the inner prison, Abakumov's last words were:

- I'll write everything, everything to the Politburo ...

He failed to reach an agreement.

Sentenced to death, former General Amayak Zakharovich Kobulov, whose older brother had already been shot, spent a long time in solitary confinement in Butyrka prison, waiting for his fate to be decided. He was sincerely surprised that he was recognized as an active participant in a conspiracy to seize power: "I can't imagine how Beria could seize power and overthrow the existing system, but I must say that you have to be a complete idiot to think about it. How can you overthrow the state against which Hitler, with his heavily armed mechanized divisions, huge aircraft and tanks, took up arms and finally broke his neck.

On November 9, 1954, Hmayak Kobulov asked for pardon:

"Today marks exactly 500 (five hundred!) days since I have been in solitary confinement. For 40 (forty) days I wait every minute, every second - death. For forty days and forty nights, with every rustle or noise of steps in the corridor, it seems to me that they are following me and should already be taken to death.

The cell in which I was placed after the death sentence is almost devoid of natural light, not even the sky is visible from it; during these forty days I did not breathe fresh air, during this time they did not take me anywhere, the toilet in the cell itself is worth unbearable stench...

I beg you, I beg you to finish with me as soon as possible - this way or that.

His request was fulfilled. On February 26, 1955, the sentence was carried out.

Former Minister of State Security of Belarus Lavrenty Fomich Tsanava was arrested for complicity in the murder of Mikhoels. He fell ill, he was placed in the hospital of the Butyrka prison. On February 17, 1954, he turned to Marshal Voroshilov, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, with a request for mercy:

"I have already written several times that in the mountains adjacent to the farm where I was born and grew up, there is a huge deposit of oil and coal. This place is unknown to anyone, and so far no work has been carried out there. As a child, when I was a shepherd, I supplied both our family and neighbors with oil and coal from these places.

In 1938, when I was the head of Kolkhdistroy, I went there with one engineer working for me, and the fact that there are large reserves of oil and coal is not in doubt, because all this sticks out to the surface. In 1938, I was transferred to work in the BSSR, and this question remained unexplored.

Dear Mr. Voroshilov! I am interested in benefiting the Motherland and do not suffer from any fantasies and quirks. This is a very big deal, so I ask you to give me the opportunity to show this place to specialists under any condition. I am a sick person, any evil intention on my part is completely excluded. Beria is my enemy, he ruined me. I am not guilty. If I will be useful for the Motherland, then I ask you to resolve the issue of to me".

Tsanava was listed as an ally of Beria, he was not released. He died behind bars. Acting Prosecutor General of the USSR State Counselor of Justice 2nd Class Pavel Vladimirovich Baranov reported to the Central Committee on October 15, 1955:

"The case on the accusation of the former Minister of State Security of the BSSR Tsanava L.F. terminated due to the death of the accused.

Tsanava since May. was being treated in a hospital at the Butyrka prison and died on 12

October. On October 14, a forensic medical expert performed an autopsy. Death of Tsanava L.F. came from insufficiency of cardiac activity on the basis of a sharp sclerosis of the coronary arteries and chronic aneurysm of the heart. Tsanava's disease L.F. was long-standing and irreversible. The lethal outcome of the disease arose as a result of the natural development of the disease.

In September 1954, trusted employees of Beria were tried: his former assistant Pyotr Afanasyevich Sharia (he received ten years, served from start to finish, left in 1963, worked at the Georgian Academy of Sciences), former heads of the NKVD secretariat, Lieutenant General Stepan Solomonovich Mamulov and Colonel Boris Alexandrovich Lyudvigov (they received fifteen years each), the former head of the secretariat of the first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, Colonel Grigory Alekseevich Ordynstev, and the head of the reception room Fyodor Vasilyevich Mukhanov (both were found guilty of failing to report a state crime and sent into exile).

Beria's Georgian associates were also punished.

September 7-19, 1955 in Tbilisi, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court tried the former ministers of state security of Georgia, Lieutenant General Avksenty Narikievich Rapava, Nikolai Maksimovich Rukhadze and the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Lieutenant General Shalva Otarovich Tsereteli, as well as Colonel Konstantin Sergeevich Savitsky (former assistant to Kobulov), Colonel Nikita Arkadyevich Krimyan (former People's Commissar of State Security of Armenia), Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Samoylovich Khazan (he worked in the secret political department at Kobulov, but was dismissed from the authorities a long time ago), Colonel Georgy Iovich Paramonov (former deputy Goglidze). Together with him, the former commandant of the inner prison of the NKVD of Georgia, and then the guard of Beria, Colonel Sardon Nikolayevich Nadarai, was put in the dock. In addition to Paramonov and Nadarai, all were sentenced to death.

At the trial, such monstrous and disgusting details of the daily activities of the Chekists during the years of the Great Terror surfaced, which is understandable why all these materials were kept under seven seals under the Soviet regime.

Reading the indictment, approved by Prosecutor General Rudenko in January 1955, is scary even now. There are testimonies of those who were interrogated by the investigators of the allied prosecutor's office. They paint a picture of how state security agencies operated in Stalin's time.

Former warden of the inner prison of the NKVD of Georgia:

"The inner prison was packed to overflowing with prisoners. In six-meter cells, 12-13 prisoners were kept, who could not only lie there, but also sat down with difficulty. If we take into account the heat that happens in Tbilisi in the summer, it is quite clear that any long stay in such a cell turned into torture.

In the inner prison there was a so-called "hot" cell, in which there was a terrible heat. The high temperature was maintained with steam. In winter, the "hot" chamber was used as a "cold" chamber. Despite the cold, the window was flung open, and water was sometimes poured on the floor in order to create completely unbearable conditions for the arrested person. The detainees in the "cold" cell were without shoes and in only underwear.

Former doctor of prison No. 1 in Tbilisi: "I don't remember the names of those who died as a result of beatings during the investigation. There were many of them, and often I didn't even know the names, as we weren't told, especially the patients in the inner prison. In the documents, the medical workers did not indicate the causes of death, as this was forbidden. It was written that a person died of a heart disease... Once I was called to a "cold" cell, but how could I help when a person was numb and needed warmth. In the "hot" cell, people asked for the only help - air.

The paramedic of the internal prison: "Usually, after interrogations, the arrested returned badly beaten, some of them were taken to the cells unconscious. Feet at

arrested were beaten to such an extent that all the skin peeled off them, and they represented one bleeding wound.

Former investigator: "There was fame about the investigators Savitsky, Khazan and Krimyan, who made a "chopped cutlet" from the arrested person and received the testimony they needed. At that time they were heroes, their names were pronounced with trepidation, they were an example on which we, young investigators, were brought up. I myself dreamed at that time to have such abilities as Krimyan or Savitsky.

Former prison worker:

"In 1937, Dvali, the driver of the head of the police department, who was also arrested, was taken to prison No. 1. Dvali was sentenced to be shot, and with a group of other sentenced men, they were preparing to take him to be shot, with his hands tied, and he was sitting in the back of a car. Krimyan arrived at the prison and demanded that Dvali be brought to my office. When he was brought in, Krimyan asked if he wanted to tell about his crimes. Dvali replied that he knew nothing and was not guilty of anything.

Then Krimyan hit the bound Dvali, who fell to the floor, and began to trample the recumbent with his feet. For several minutes, Krimyan stamped on him, demanding to testify, but Dvali insisted that he did not know anything. Then the guards took Dvali away, put him in a car and took him away to be shot."

Former investigator: "I saw how Krimyan, Savitsky and Gamsakhurdia mercilessly beat the convicted Dzidziguri with hilts and killed him before he was shot. During the beating of former state security officer Morkovin, Savitsky and Krimyan accused him of not conferring special ranks on them, and mockingly asked him: "Well, now you will give us ranks?"

Prison No. 1 typist: "Paramonov, along with other investigators, came to the prison, as a rule, drunk and started beating. I remember that Paramonov beat Zelentsov, who was Paramonov's boss in the past. Before Zelentsov was taken out for execution, Paramonov called him in and in the prison yard (we called the household yard) proceeded to beat Zelentsov. I heard blows, groans and screams of Zelentsov. Zelentsov died in the yard."

Tbilisi Prison Inspector:

"The procedure for receiving those sentenced to death took place at the commandant's office, where the condemned were called one by one. At the table sat Nadaraya and two of his assistants. Having ascertained the identity of the condemned, Nadaraya sat down in his place, and his assistants attacked the prisoner, and the brutal beating began.

After Zelentsov was killed, Paramonov said that Zelentsov was his boss and found fault with him, as he put it - "did not give life." Paramonov participated in almost all cases of beatings of those arrested and sentenced to death. It was felt that he experienced some kind of pleasure when he beat the arrested, sentenced to death - he knew that they would not complain about him, and gave vent to his dark instincts. He was a real sadist."

The paramedic of the internal prison: "Mamiya Orakhelashvili (the former first secretary of the Transcaucasian regional party committee, that is, the former head of Beria. - *Auth.*) had bleeding wounds on his back. There were many bruises on the legs. Together with Orakhelashvili, there was one arrested person in the cell, who was either insane or pretended to be insane. He tormented Orakhelashvili in the cell, scratched him, beat him, did not give him any life; Orakhelashvili was forced to hide from him under the bed in the cell.

The wife of a former employee of the NKVD of Georgia, Osipova, was also arrested. She survived. And then she was able to tell what she experienced:

"I was called in for interrogation last night. I was led into a large office. When I entered, several employees were standing with their backs to me. They parted and I saw my husband. He was reclining and looked terrible. His face was all bloody, bruised, his hair was profusely saturated with blood and stood on end. One of his legs was bare, and she

completely lost shape, was terribly swollen and incredibly large. She was all filled with iodine and lay on a galosh.

Osipov looked like a half-dead person. In an incredibly weak voice, barely moving his arms and with great effort, slightly turning his head towards me, he asked: "Where is the child?" I replied, "I don't know." After that, he told me: "I am not to blame for anything, I don't understand what is happening." I was numb with horror and fell into a semi-conscious state.

Former head of the Tbilisi prison: "In the summer of 1937, the former division commander Buachidze came to me from the inner prison. He was beaten half dead. Of course, he couldn't stand on his feet. He couldn't speak, only moaned. I remember that Buachidze's entire body was covered with continuous bruises and bruises. He could not urinate naturally, because his bladder was damaged, and urine came out through his stomach ... In fact, Buachidze was already in his death throes. It must be said that Buachidze was of strong build and healthy, and therefore his condition was especially striking. The day after Buachidze was taken to prison, he died."

Why was the divisional commander imprisoned? In July 1937, Beria - from Tbilisi - reported to Stalin that he had uncovered a conspiracy in the Transcaucasian Military District and therefore it was necessary to arrest the command of the 47th Georgian Rifle Division. The commander of the 63rd Georgian division, Fyodor Moiseevich Buachidze, who graduated from the Military Academy named after M.V. Frunze, Lavrenty Pavlovich made the leader of the Georgian nationalist organization.

Former head of the Tbilisi prison:

"Letkeman, who worked as a beekeeper at the Third International state farm, was arrested by the Gagra department of the NKVD on charges of sabotage. Rukhadze led the investigation into this case. Letkeman was subjected to brutal beatings, as a result of which he began to give ridiculous testimony, slandering dozens of innocent people.

Letkeman testified, in particular, that he was allegedly the chief resident of German intelligence and led an extensive network of agents not only on the territory of Georgia, but also in a number of other republics of the Soviet Union. On the basis of these fictitious testimonies, the persons named by him were arrested, who, in turn, after the use of torture, slandered other persons who were also arrested. In total, more than 30 people were arrested in the Letkeman case."

Moreover, the deputy head of the Gagra city department of the NKVD, V.N. Vasiliev sent a report to the Republican People's Commissar Sergei Goglidze, describing how Rukhadze beats out indications:

"It began with the exposure of Letkeman with his hands up and with the deprivation of food, drink and the opportunity to recover - testimonies during this period about sabotage in beekeeping.

The second period - beating: Letkeman was stripped naked and beaten for several hours on anything. At this time, testimonies about dozens of spies, residents, sub-residents, etc. A rope loop was put on the genitals, then this loop was squeezed. They beat me on the head, crushed my feet with the heel of my boot.

In a word, in the office day and night there was a continuous howl, scream and groans. If Letkeman testified that he had recruited, say, three, then he was beaten for being few, if, say, thirty were recruited, for being too many. During the interrogations of Letkeman, I became convinced that he absolutely did not understand what sabotage agents, mass information, agents on conservation, etc. are.

What was the reaction?

Vasiliev was expelled from the party. And Rukhadze, receiving promotion after promotion, proudly wrote in his operational autobiography:

"From 1935 to October 1937 he worked in Gagra as the commandant of the Gagra special border commandant's office, then head of the Gagra department of the NKVD of the GSSR.

He personally opened the German residency, headed by the beekeeper Letkeman G., who had contact with the German colonists in the Stavropol Territory. According to our guidelines

the German residency was also opened and liquidated there.

In the case of Letkeman on Gagra, 17 spies of German intelligence were identified and exposed. All were condemned to capital punishment. Under my direct supervision (intelligence and investigative activities), up to 700 people of enemies of the people, exposed in sabotage, sabotage and terrorist activities, were exposed and arrested. Most of them were sentenced to CMN. The rest to different terms of punishment.

In 1956, it was the turn of the former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Mir-Jafar Bagirov, under whose leadership Beria had once started in the Cheka. The arrest of Lavrenty Pavlovich predetermined the fall of Bagirov. He was considered a man of Beria. But Beria did not refuse:

- Yes, it was I who proposed Bagirov's candidacy for the post of secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Azerbaijan.

Feeling his support, the owner of Azerbaijan behaved self-confidently, did not take Moscow officials into account. They were waiting for an excuse to settle accounts with the willful Bakuvian. He was reminded how, in response to the announcement of the arrival from Moscow of the Deputy Union Minister by the name of Kozlov, he scoffed:

- And Baranov does not come?

For two decades he remained the complete and sole owner of Azerbaijan. None of the Republican leaders managed to hold office for so long. Considering Stalin's passionate desire to transfer personnel from place to place, Bagirov's political longevity was a unique phenomenon.

On September 14, 1946, over a government long-distance HF connection in Sochi, where Stalin was resting, they transmitted a note from Politburo member Zhdanov: "September 17 marks the 50th anniversary of the birth of Comrade. Bagirov. After consulting with Com. Beria, we believe that the 50th anniversary of Comrade Bagirov, awarding him the Order of Lenin. We ask for your consent."

On the note there was a note: "Comrade. Poskrebyshev asked me to convey that the issue of awarding Comrade. Bagirov reported to comrade. Stalin, and he does not object to the proposal of Comrades. Zhdanova and Beria.

His word in the republic was law. Imitating Stalin, he walked around his office. His subordinates were mortally afraid of him. Some officials were arrested right in his office. Unlimited power turned him into a tyrant.

"Bagirov is a man with a heavy, unsociable look, an insinuatingly imperious voice, and by nature a criminal," recalled Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov, chairman of the State Planning Committee of the USSR, who worked in Azerbaijan for many years. "How many wonderful people he killed, especially among the workers in the oil industry!"

Thanks to the location of Stalin and Beria, he was forgiven a lot. But Azerbaijan was going through hard times. The secret report of the Party Control Committee under the Central Committee stated:

"In 1951, in connection with the non-fulfillment of the plan, on the instructions of Bagirov, the forcible seizure of livestock owned by collective farmers, workers and employees was carried out en masse by searches and detention of livestock in yards and pastures. Selected livestock was transferred to collective farms and credited to the implementation of the plan for the development of public animal husbandry. Currently, 60 percent of households in Azerbaijan do not have cattle.

When harvesting wool, Bagirov gave an illegal order to take wool from mattresses and pillows belonging to collective farmers, workers and employees, in connection with which there were numerous cases of forcible seizure of wool.

After Stalin's death, to everyone's surprise, Mir-Jafar Bagirov was elected a candidate member of the Presidium of the Central Committee. It was his moment of triumph. The inertia of a good Stalinist attitude towards Bagirov continued to act even when the leader himself was already lying lifeless. Baku proudly noted that for the first time a representative of Azerbaijan

became a member of the country's top leadership.

Bagirov realized that he owed the high appointment to Beria. But he did not enjoy his high position for very long - some four months. The fall from Olympus happened as rapidly as the takeoff. Both he owed to Beria. For Bagirov, his arrest was like a bolt from the blue. He was in a political province, did not recognize the rapid course of events. When it was his turn to speak at the plenum of the Central Committee dedicated to the Beria case, he did not find the right words and put an end to his career.

He was given the floor at the morning meeting on July 3, 1953, right after Lazar Moiseevich Kaganovich, a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee.

Bagirov began his speech unsuccessfully:

- Comrades, working far from Moscow, recently after the party and the country lost Comrade Stalin, and not being aware of what is happening here, is being done, and having recently received a number of documents, I must directly tell the plenum of the Central Committee, I felt some kind of heaviness in my soul, that something was not right ... And yesterday, when I first learned from Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev about the decision of the presidium, about what things happened, that I just can't believe it, some kind of heaviness from the soul I took it off, and I immediately felt some relief. This relief, I think, was felt not only by me, but also by other comrades, if not all ...

Bagirov frantically tried to understand what Beria should be blamed for, and could not think of:

- Apparently, this person has not only been working for enemies in recent years. Apparently, with a distant goal, he was thrown into our party by an agent of international imperialism ... On behalf of Beria, they called the Minister of State Security of the Republic Yemelyanov to provide information about the national composition of the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. He seems to have started with this. Comrade Yemelyanov was also asked to give his thoughts on who he could be replaced from among the local nationality. Emelyanov, like a dozen other comrades, was raised by the Azerbaijan Party Organization ... This attempt failed.

Bagirov missed the opportunity to help the Moscow leaders prepare Beria's case when he did not develop the theme of Lavrenty Pavlovich's work for the counterintelligence of the Musavat government. Apparently, this is exactly what was expected from the leader of Azerbaijan. Bagirov said that Beria was going to introduce new orders - in honor of cultural figures, including those from different republics. The members of the Presidium did not know this. And in the hall they reacted disapprovingly, they asked:

- Did you call Comrade Malenkov?
- I didn't call.

There was noise in the hall:

- Badly.

Baghirov:

- Comrades can say why I did not call the Central Committee, did not ask. I must say that we receive thousands of calls every day. Until yesterday Nikita Sergeevich called me, didn't tell me, I didn't know ...

Malenkov from the presidium reassured him:

- Nobody charges you, we are talking about exposing Beria.

But Khrushchev made it clear that Bagirov is considered a friend and ally of Beria - with all the ensuing consequences:

- You know him more than others, that's why people say, you have to tell, you knew him more ...

Bagirov began to make excuses. It turned out unconvincing.

- Regarding calls. I left here after the death of Comrade Stalin on March 16th. During this time, Beria called me once. For fifteen years here in Moscow (I don't want to shoot

responsibility for the fact that I could not get to the bottom of this person, I do not say this in defense of myself), I visited him once at home. And then with Comrade Stalin. And the rest of the time he met like that, or he called for me ...

Voice from the audience:

- Comrade Bagirov, when you start making excuses, you don't do it out loud. You say that the Central Committee has forgotten in recent years...

- I?

"We only went to the boss.

- I? - Bagirov was confused and did not know what to answer.

- We went all the time to Beria ...

- I could not consider Beria the chief of Azerbaijan, although he tried to do it ... When I was here, I went to the Central Committee, and to all ministries, to all organizations, and, for that matter, very rarely when I was alone with Beria ...

The secretary of the Central Committee, Mikhail Andreevich Suslov, intervened:

- The instructors of the Central Committee were afraid to go to Azerbaijan.

- To Azerbaijan? Bagirov asked.

He clearly did not expect such words. Not accustomed to the role of justifying. For decades, he himself contemptuously smashed the enemies of the people from the rostrum. And the hall obediently listened to him. And suddenly

Everything has changed.

- Yes, in Azerbaijani organizations, - Suslov confirmed, already realizing that Bagirov would not sit in his chair for long, - they were afraid that you had a boss.

Baghirov was completely at a loss:

- I do not know. Maybe.

Malenkov tried to explain to him that the members of the Central Committee were waiting for revelations from him. enemy activities of Beria:

- Comrade Bagirov, you are making excuses, this is not necessary. You were close to Beria, this is not the issue being discussed now ... And therefore the plenum is perplexed. You defend yourself. You were seen more than all the others embracing Beria ...

But Bagirov did not understand how he should behave. He muttered:

- I'm not making excuses, I just want to say that it hurts me to listen to some of the remarks of my comrades ...

The long-term owner of Azerbaijan left the rostrum without a portion of applause due to him. After the meeting, he tried to correct the matter - to explain himself to Malenkov and Khrushchev. The conversation did not work out, because his fate was sealed.

A joint plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and the Baku City Committee was held in Baku. Bagirov was removed from the post of chairman of the Council of Ministers of the republic and removed from the bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan - "for non-party behavior in the case of Beria, insincerity towards the party and major political mistakes."

Pyotr Pospelov, secretary of the CPSU Central Committee for ideological affairs, flew to the plenum. He was an academic and a dogmatist. When Stalin died, Pospelov sobbed. But in Baku he sharply opposed Stalin's favorite. In one day, the man who ruled Azerbaijan for two decades, whom his subordinates addressed as a living deity, turned into

into nothing.

In Moscow on July 17, 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU decided:

"1. Approve the decision of the joint plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and the Baku City Party Committee with the asset on the removal of comrade Bagirov M.D. from the post of chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR and about his removal from the bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan for non-party behavior in the Beria case, insincerity towards the party and major political mistakes in work, expressed in gross violation of party principles for the selection and placement of personnel, clamping down on criticism and self-criticism, replacing collective leadership with individual decisions, cultivating servility and sycophancy...

2. Bring Comrade Bagirova M.D. from the list of candidates for members of the Presidium of the Central committee of the CPSU.

Usually, removed bosses were allowed to move to Moscow, where they could safely move on to retirement life. Bagirov was not allowed into Moscow. He was not even allowed to stay in the republic, so that he would not interfere with the new leadership. They found a purely economic position of deputy head of the Kuibyshevneft association of the USSR Ministry of the Oil Industry for personnel.

In June 1954, a commission was formed in Baku to review the cases of "those convicted of counter-revolutionary crimes in the Azerbaijan SSR." Bagirov was arrested. They put him on trial after the 20th Congress. Khrushchev had already delivered his famous report on Stalin's crimes, but neither Bagirov nor the Azerbaijani Chekists could refer to the fact that all decisions in the country were made by Stalin and the Politburo. The defendants were not allowed to talk about the instructions they received from Moscow.

On April 26, 1956, Mir-Jafar Bagirov was sentenced to death for counter-revolutionary and terrorist activities. On May 7, the Presidium of the Central Committee approved the verdict. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR rejected the request for pardon. On May 23, Pravda reported that the sentence had been carried out.

Together with him, they shot the former leaders of the republican department of state security: Deputy People's Commissar Timofey Mikhailovich Borshchev, Deputy People's Commissar Khoren Ivanovich Grigoryan, Deputy People's Commissar Ruben Ambartsumovich Markaryan - as members of the "Beria-Bagirov conspiratorial group." Former Minister of Internal Affairs Agha Salim Ibragim oglu Atakishiyev and former Minister of State Security Stepan Fedorovich Yemelyanov were sentenced to twenty-five years in prison in forced labor camps...

They tried to localize the investigation into the case of Beria and his associates in his native places - Georgia and Azerbaijan. It is characteristic that at these trials they deliberately limited themselves to what was happening in the thirties in the economy of Beria. They even wanted to geographically localize the crimes that, on the orders of Stalin and his henchmen, were committed by state security agencies throughout the country. And one more thing is striking: the names of the executioners - Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Jewish, Polish ... The main thing was to prove that all these were Beria's perversions, distortions of the correct line, excesses ... The exception, not the rule.

But it is not difficult to assume that something similar happened throughout the country. It is absurd to think that it was the Chekist apparatus of Transcaucasia that consisted entirely of sadists and murderers. Party and government leaders knew this very well. In the multi-volume "Materials for checking on violations of the law" presented by him, episodes incomprehensible to the human mind were described:

"In the NKVD of the Byelorussian SSR, the arrested were dragged into straitjackets, doused with water and exposed to frost, ammonia was poured into the nose, mockingly called "drops of sincerity."

In the Economic Department of the NKVD of the USSR, the arrested person was forced to take a suitcase on his shoulders and walk around the room with it for hours, repeating that he was "leaving for London with spy materials for British intelligence." In the Special Department of the Belarusian Military District, the arrested were forced hundreds of times to squat with a Bible in outstretched hands, to bark like a dog. In the Vologda Oblast, the arrested were shoved behind a closet. In the NKVD of the Turkmen SSR, the arrested were put in a disinfection chamber saturated with a weak concentration of chloropicrin; exposed to the sun in the summer heat; they smeared their hair with glue, and when the glue dried, they combed their head with a comb.

In the NKVD of the Turkmen SSR, 16 arrested people were killed during interrogations. Fictitious documents were compiled about the causes of death. The bodies of the dead were taken out of the NKVD building in weapons boxes. If the corpse turned out to be longer than the box, then it was "shortened" by breaking the legs.

In the UNKVD of the Zhytomyr region, an innocent 67-year-old woman was killed in the garage with a shovel.

Employees of the Belozersky regional department of the NKVD of the Vologda region in December 1937 took 55 people sentenced to death by the "troika" to the field and chopped them with axes. In the same regional department, a 70-year-old old woman and a 46-year-old disabled woman were killed with logs."

Of course, the trial of Beria was pure farce. Both he and his associates deserved the most severe punishment, but for other crimes. The trouble is that the then leaders could not and did not want to call everyone by their proper names. And it is clear why: one would have to admit that the system itself naturally leads to mass crimes, in which they are personally involved.

As a result, society did not recognize and did not realize what was going on. Not horrified! Did not condemn the criminals. And myself - for complicity. Not learned from the tragic past.

And now the ridiculous accusations seem to cast doubt on the validity of the punishment. They were not spies or traitors. They were vile killers and sadists. If you strictly follow the law, Beria and his accomplices should have been acquitted of all the charges against them. And judge again. But you can't bring the dead into the courtroom. And just take and justify Beria is unthinkable and impossible.

One hundred and fourteen days of Beria's reign in 1953 leave researchers in some confusion. Can the main executioner of the country be a reformer?

Four months - after the death of Stalin and before his arrest - Beria was in power. In these four months, it was he who set about resuscitating the already almost completely ruined country: the doors of the camps were opened, the atmosphere of fear was weakened, the position of the peasantry was eased, and the first signs of detente flashed in international politics.

Fans of Lavrenty Pavlovich claim that if Beria had remained in power, there would not have been a reincarnation of the ossified Marxist-Leninist ideology, which began with Khrushchev's crazy idea to build communism, and ended with the internal collapse of the system under Brezhnev. Lavrenty Pavlovich would have acted more rationally...

The difference between Khrushchev and Beria was that Nikita Sergeevich really wanted to make people's lives better. The sole power was for him a tool to achieve this goal. And he released people from the camps, not for glory, but because he believed that they were imprisoned illegally. Beria, on the other hand, thought only about how to become popular with the help of reforms and take power in the country. For him, power was an end in itself. Beriev's innovations of 1953, which frightened other leaders of the country, were just an attempt to create authority in the country. He tried on the owner's chair.

And what would happen if in the summer of 1953 Lavrenty Pavlovich defeated his rivals? It is safe to say that his reforms would have been short-lived. When he was sure that he firmly held power in his hands, the country would again return to the Gulag and repression. Beria did not know other management methods. And any attempt to liberalize or reform real socialism leads to its collapse, which happened in 1991.